

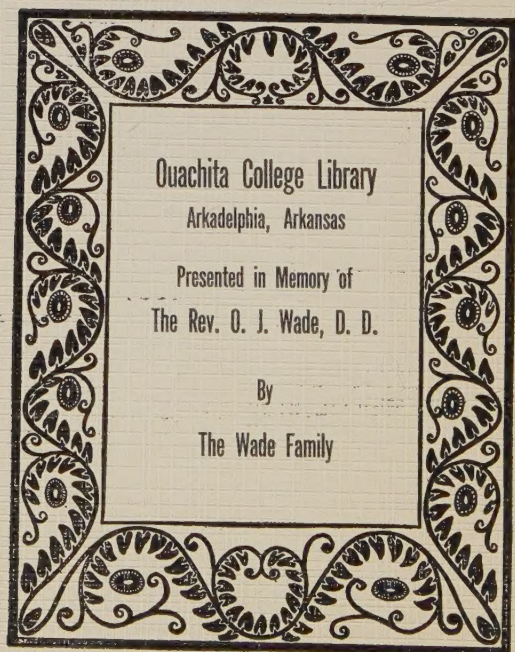
THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

W. W. WEEKS



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THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



W. W. Weeks

(MEMORIAL VOLUME)

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Sermons on the Person and Work of Christ

By W. W. WEEKS, D.D.

with biographical sketch by

REV. CHARLES GEORGE SMITH, B.D.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
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A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Wellesley Weeks was born on January 31, 1856, in Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Canada (an integral part of the Province of Nova Scotia, but separated from it by a narrow strait called the Gut of Canso). He was fortunate in his place of birth. There is no part of Canada more richly romantic and historic than Nova Scotia, with its seafaring and explorer ancestry that includes the names of John Cabot, Cortereal, Verrazano, Jacques Cartier, The Marquis de la Roche, Samuel Champlain and Sir William Alexander. Cape Breton Island is the "nor'-easter" end of Nova Scotia proper, and juts out to sea in solemn grandeur like a protecting bulwark. There is a water-color painting hanging in my study that used to greatly fascinate Dr. Weeks. It is an exact picture of his birthplace, albeit it is actually a bit of Devonshire coast. How often I have seen him gazing affectionately and eagerly upon that painting and pointing out the very path that wound round the hill, from his boyhood's home to the little red schoolhouse, with the waves dashing far below. And then he would repeat, in that soft, silvery voice of his, the lines of Barry Cornwall:

"The sea, the sea, the open sea,
The blue, the fresh, the ever free,
Without a mark, without a bound,
It runneth the earth's wide region round,
It plays with the clouds; it mocks the skies,
Or like a cradled creature lies."

One can readily understand and appreciate the abiding influence which such a birthplace had upon the mental and spiritual growth of a man of Dr. Weeks' susceptible temperament. I think his whole after-life was moulded and colored by his boyhood's environment beside the sea. He possessed in a high degree those twin elements which are conducive to true development—love of the past and hope for the future, a freedom that never ran into license, and a conservatism that never became obscurantism. George Herbert said, "He that will learn to pray, let him go to sea." I believe that Dr. Weeks learned to pray and to preach by the sea. In all his sermons and prayers I sensed the element of mystery and music and magic and moods that spring out of the depths of the dark, blue sea. In one of his sermons he says: "There is nothing in nature that looks so much like a human soul as the boundless ocean. The dark, yeasty waters stretch away to the distant horizon, and marry the sky behind a bridal veil of mist. Here you find Infinity—you feel it. Here is the velvet touch of mystery. Here is the same heaving inquietude I find within my own troubled heart" (from a sermon on the text Rev. 15: 2, "I saw a sea of glass, mingled with fire"). One of his favorite quotations was from Longfellow's "The Building of the Ship":

"The dim, dark sea, so like unto death,
That divides and yet unites mankind."

His favorite painting in the National Gallery of British Art, London (popularly known as the Tate Gallery), was George Frederick Watts,' entitled, "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it." I have been with him many times in London, and he never tired of strolling along the

Thames embankment, near the grim old Vauxhall Bridge, for a "constitutional"; and invariably he would say, "Let's go in and see Watts' picture." I never asked, "Which one?" I knew.

Dr. Weeks was also fortunate in his parentage. He sprang from those in whom were combined the best features of Auld Scotia and Old England. Through his veins there flowed the blood of the Celtic Highlander and the sturdy Devonian. "Andrews," "Musgrave," "Weeks,"—truly this was a noble family tree, and in it there was an equally wonderful religious blending of Covenanter-Presbyterian, Cavalier-Anglican, and Puritan-Calvinistic-Baptist. His father, Foster James Weeks, and his mother, Margaret Andrews, were a godly, refined, devoted pair, serving their generation by the will of God and bringing up their eight children, six boys and two girls, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In our thirty-two years of friendship—a friendship that deepened into closest intimacy, and the exchange of sacrest confidences, Dr. Weeks spoke seldom or ever about his childhood and youth, except in an oblique way, and, chiefly then, during the last ten years of his life. I think this was due to the fact that he was not in any sense at all an "autobiographical man," and expatiating on "when I was a boy," or the exploits, foibles, "fables" and folklore of childhood was not to his taste. Replying to a question asked by a friend as to how he spent his boyhood in that remote seaside spot on Cape Breton Island, he mordantly, yet merrily, replied: "I spent it the way every other boy did; I grew up, went to school and church, and worked." Yet he always spoke in affectionate terms of his kind and faithful father (who lived to be 72). His father was a

most devout Christian in word and in deed. He was a great reader. He studied the Bible daily, and was known throughout the countryside for his saintly life. Dr. Weeks often confessed that he was one of the greatest inspirations of his life. It was generally understood, among the inner circle, that much of Dr. Weeks' strength of character, keenness of intellectual thought, and seer-like spiritual vision was paternally inherited. His mother was the very light of his eyes. He revered her, and spoke of her, in almost awed tones, as a true mother in Israel.

"Happy he with such a mother."

Sunday, August 18, 1912, Dr. Weeks was preaching at the Ferme Park Baptist Church, London, when he received the cable announcing his mother's death in her 90th year. Such a birthplace and parentage and upbringing in those far-off days gave a seriousness to life almost amounting to solemnity. "Life is real; life is earnest" was the keynote and temper of all those godly, frugal families of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia. Plain living and high thinking was of the very stuff that William Wellesley Weeks was reared on; and to fear God and keep his commandments, this was the whole duty of every man and every child, and woe be to the poor soul who tried to shirk life's stern duties, or to turn life into sport or comedy. In that urge Dr. Weeks was early led to the feet of Christ, as his Saviour and Lord, and, on confession of his faith, and after having given "evidence of a true change of heart, and a clear testimony in life and conduct to the new birth" (as the old formula ran), he was baptized by Rev. J. B. MacDonald, in March, 1877, in the Wentworth Creek, near the bridge, and united with the Baptist church in Sydney, at the age of twenty-one.

His brother, Edward, and his sister, Carrie, were baptized with him. They had to keep back the broken ice with stout sticks during the baptismal service. Their clothes were frozen stiff before they reached home, but "it did no harm to any of us, and we caught no cold. But I remember vividly how cold the day was." So writes his surviving "Sister Carrie" (Mrs. Charles Dumaesq, of Dorchester, Mass.), after the lapse of fifty-one years.

There is no Royal Road into the ministry—especially the Baptist ministry, and there was certainly no thought among his friends that this tall, lithe, handsome Cape Breton youth, with those wondrous speaking eyes, and that soft, musical voice, was destined for a premier place in the Baptist ministry. He had no such thought himself. Often he has told me (speaking of those youthful and early manhood days), "I don't know how I came to go into the ministry. I wasn't brought up with that idea in mind. I was led into it by the Holy Spirit, and pushed into it by friends and circumstances," and that is the whole story. And that is the usual story (in spite of a thousand differing details) of every man of God's own choosing. In the meantime, Dr. Weeks did "ye nexte thinge" (as the old Kentish phrase has it), which was to fling himself immediately and whole-heartedly into the work of the local church and Sunday school, to systematically study his Bible, and to "take part" in the prayer-meeting. He steadily grew in the grace and the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Soon he was led by the Holy Spirit and pushed by friends and circumstances into teaching a Bible class, conducting cottage prayer-meetings, and preaching in the little country churches round about. He early displayed a unique genius for expository preaching,

textual analysis, apt illustration, and earnest evangelistic appeal. Souls were saved under his preaching, saints were edified, and even "the man in the street" was attracted to his fresh and powerful proclamation of the old truths of the blessed gospel of the happy God.

In the meantime, having left Sydney and gone to St. John, N. B., Dr. Weeks came under the influence of Rev. Dr. Elisha W. Hopper, with whom he was associated in the printing business, and in the publication of a weekly Baptist paper called *The Messenger and Visitor*. Dr. Hopper was to him, in very truth, a "right reverend father in God." He taught him to preach, he tutored him in his studies, and he counseled him as to his life's work. Dr. Hopper was his beau ideal of a vigorous pulpit advocate, platform pleader, and defender of the Protestant faith.

In the year 1880, Dr. Weeks was married to Florence Annie Titus, his devoted friend, Dr. Hopper, performing the ceremony. After forty-eight years of equal and beloved yoking together, Mrs. Weeks survives him, together with their only surviving child (Miss Nan F. Weeks, the Editor of the Children's publications of the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia). Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll once declared that to be a successful minister's wife was probably the most difficult task in the world. He spoke of the infinite stock of patience required, the economy of time and purse and parochial duties, and, above all, the poise and wisdom and strength and love necessary to be a true "helpmeet" to any outstanding minister. As I recall his article (and he was sketching the career of F. W. Robertson, of Brighton), he declared that in most instances he knew that, and he knew literally of thousands I'm sure, most min-

isters' wives were successful. What a noble tribute! And Mrs. Weeks belongs in this class. "Mrs. Weeks is a home-bird." That was a constant expression of Dr. Weeks when we were thousands of miles from home. "A home-bird," apt description. The household competency of this consecrated "home-bird" is only matched by her strength of character and will, depth of conviction, Christ-like devotion to her husband and his church, and Dorcas-like deeds, "noiselessly" performed through the long and changing years. Tennyson's portrait of a perfect wife fits her exactly:

"A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws, an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey,
A hate of gossip parlance and of sway,
Crown'd . . . , thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife."

May the eventide of loneliness and waiting "beside the muffled oar" be made bright and beautiful in the retrospect of nearly fifty years of oneness in life and purpose and prayer and fellowship and achievement with this noble servant of God who now rests from his labors.

In the year 1884, the way was opened by the good hand of Providence for Dr. Weeks to take a course of studies in McMaster University, and under the tutelage of Goodspeed, Rand, McGregor, Welton, Newman, Campbell, and other scholarly, faithful and devoted Baptist professors, this youthful and promising "boy-preacher" of the Maritimes (as he was called), was "brought out" and "brought up," and returned to his life-passion of preaching the unsearch-

able riches of Christ in a life-giving stream of intelligent faith, reasoned belief, trained power, and consecrated leadership—a young workman who needed not to be ashamed, and who could rightly divide the word of truth. In 1901 his Alma Mater conferred upon him its Doctorate in Divinity, *honoris causa*.

Dr. Weeks had a masterfulness, a grip of truth, a vocal expression, and an experience of life and men, far beyond his years, and it is not surprising, therefore, that he was eagerly sought for by many prominent churches at the very outset of his ministerial career. In addition to his gifted mental and spiritual equipment, he was dowered with a noble physique. He stood just under six feet tall, with a handsome presence, and a liquid voice “like the sound of many waters.” He was led to accept the urgent call of the Baptist Church in Brockville, Ontario, a pretty little town on the broad banks of the St. Lawrence River. Here he was ordained in 1886, and here he remained till 1893. The Brockville Church was composed of fine families, and well-to-do people, and it had a tradition for eloquent ministers, a “tradition” which the young minister, fresh from McMaster University, enhanced a hundredfold during his seven years’ pastorate. Dr. Alex Maclaren used often to say he thanked God that he was “stuck down in a quiet place” for his first pastorate. The members of the four outstanding Baptist churches in Moncton, Toronto, Springfield and Richmond may well say the same concerning the beloved man of God who served them in the subsequent years of his unfolding ministry with such biblical skill and persuasive eloquence. It was in the little town of Brockville that he laid the solid and enduring foundation for all his future

preaching ability, homiletical habits, and platform powers. Here he studied his New Testament Greek, with an interleaved copy crammed with original notes. Here he soaked himself (as he phrased it) in Spurgeon and Maclaren and Phillips Brooks. Here he found abundant time to read the world's great literature and poetry, to learn the art of personal soul-winning and tender ministrations to the sick and bereaved; and here, above all, he toiled terribly over his sermons, week by week, writing them and re-writing them, thus unconsciously committing them to memory, and perfecting their delivery with meticulous care. He proved that people will flock to hear a good sermon, well delivered—anywhere and anywhen, and that there can be as much originality and interest in a sermon as in anything else. He laid broad and deep, at Brockville, the foundations for a sermonic-ministry, and that was the norm of his ministry to the very last. He chose that single path—perhaps we would even say “narrow path” in these “busy, here and there” days—and to that path he stuck. He had a facile pen, and he wrote easily and delightfully as a correspondent or writer in his all-too-rare religious articles. But he never developed that line. He was a splendid lecturer in his early days—with a popular vein, and a good didactic “punch” in his style—but he never developed that line. He had excellent ability on denominational boards, university senates, and missionary society committees (as he abundantly proved in his closing years at Richmond, and to the great surprise and delight even, of his most intimate friends), yet for thirty years he took little or no part in the ecclesiastical ongoings of the Baptist denomination, as a “committeeman,” or board chairman, or convention executive. He was al-

ways loyal and kindly towards the particular Baptist Convention, and all its boards, wherever he was then serving as a pastor, and he led his large and wealthy churches into generous giving towards the denominational budgets, and especially the missionary causes. A certain constitutional restlessness, a distaste for committee meetings, for probes, and problems, and policies, and program-fixings of all sorts; and, above all, a supersensitiveness and child-like tenderness of soul; these traits (which he knew were in his "make-up"—as he has often whimsically told me) he felt unfitted him for routine tasks in the denomination. And so he stuck rigidly to his preaching-ministry. He was in constant demand as a convention preacher, and for church anniversaries, revival services, and religious gatherings of all kinds. And he always gladly responded to these all-too-numerous calls even to the point of exhaustion. No church was too small, and no distance was too great, and no parsonage was too humble, for William Wellesley Weeks. The only condition he made was that he be allowed "just to preach to the people." Eternity alone will reveal the churches and pastors and people who were gladdened and revived and saved by his preaching visits year by year, in season and out of season. He dearly loved the little country churches, and the needy, hard-driven and poorly-paid pastors. He was the most generous man I have ever met, and the most unmercenary. There was never any "side" to him, or any discourtesy or rudeness, in facing the humblest or smallest congregation in the most out-of-the-way spot on earth. He always preached his best sermon in the smallest churches. He seemed to glory in the fact that those to whom he was preaching were "heirs of God, and joint-heirs

with Jesus Christ," and he would go out of his way to shake hands with them all, and speak a kindly word here and there, and pat them lovingly on the back. And he was so approachable. The humblest soul could speak to him without fear of coldness or rebuff. Many a time I have seen him seated on a plain, pine bench in a little village church, after the service was dismissed, talking to an inquirer, or a backslider, or a poor Christian in "doubting castle." What earnestness he displayed. What evident understanding and sympathy. What persuasiveness. And he did it all so naturally and winsomely. There was no striving for effect, no staging a piece, it was all the spontaneous outgoing of a big, brotherly Greatheart to his fellow-companions on life's hard and dreary road. And as he was when he first came into my life thirty-two years ago, so he remained until his health failed, and he was forced to husband his fast-ebbing strength in order to tide over his Sabbath week-ends in his own beloved church. I spent a very happy week with him just a month before the end came, and I realized then—though we never discussed the matter particularly—that his kindly heart was at the breaking point because he had to say "no" to the many calls that continued to pour in upon him from the little churches and the needy churches, for evangelistic services and anniversary sermons. There will be, I am sure, many stars in this good man's heavenly crown, but the brightest of all those "forget-me-nots of the angels" (as Longfellow beautifully named them) will be his enriching and evangelizing sermon-ministry, through forty years, to the needy churches of Canada, England, and the United States, and the souls he has won for Christ one by one, and the backsliders he has

restored to the love of God, and the service of Christ. His seven years in Brockville were marked by the entrance of seven young men into the ministry—a man for each year of his work.

After leaving Brockville in 1893, Dr. Weeks became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Moncton, New Brunswick (the largest Baptist church in the Maritime Provinces of Canada), remaining there until 1895, when he became pastor (after being “called” twice, and “waited for” for over a year) of the Walmer Road Baptist Church, Toronto, Ontario. In 1904, Dr. Weeks was called to the Highland Baptist Church of Springfield, Massachusetts, which was later united with the First Baptist Church, becoming known as the First-Highland Church. In May, 1920, he became pastor of the Grace Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia. He quietly entered heaven on the golden Sabbath morning of June 17, 1928, where he is “forever with the Lord”—“Far from this world of grief and sin, with God eternally shut in.”

“And lo, as he entered heaven, he was transfigured, and had raiment put on him that shone like gold. There were also that met him with harps and crowns; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honor. And all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and it was said unto him, ‘Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.’ And I looked in after him, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praise withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord,’ and

after that they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them." (Adapted from the scene entitled, "They enter the Celestial City," from *The Pilgrim's Progress*.)

I love to feel that John Bunyan's mystic dream of Pilgrim's entry into the Celestial City has been the experience of Dr. Weeks. That was the one passage of literature that flashed into my mind when I received the telegram announcing that he had crossed "the River of Death," and it abides with me still. Dr. Weeks loved Bunyan, and revelled in "the Pilgrim's Progress," and knew his "characters" from "Evangelist" to "Charity," and from "Talkative" to "Great-heart." At his suggestion I planned a tour of the Bunyan country, in England, during one of the summers when he was preaching in London. I shall never forget our pilgrimage to Bunhill Fields Cemetery, to Bedford, Elstowe, and the River Ouse, nor the delight of Dr. Weeks in tracing the footsteps of that noble old Baptist.

We had many other journeys together, year by year in the British Isles—to the Burns country, and Edinburgh; to the Lake districts of England, and the homes and haunts of Wordsworth; to Lincolnshire, and the Tennyson country; to Dublin and Belfast, and the home of Daniel O'Connell, and Drogheda, and the River Boyne, and lovely Killarney; to Kent, "the garden of England," and the home of Charles Dickens; but I think "Bunyan-land" made the deepest impress on his soul. He was fascinated with the stately bronze statue of Bunyan on St. Peter's Green, Bedford, where four roads meet, and made out of old cannon and bells brought from China. I can "hear" him now, in fancy, reading aloud the inscription, taken from the description

of the picture of a "very grave person" that Bunyan saw in his dream hanging on the wall in the interpreter's house:

"It had eyes uplifted to heaven;
The best of Books in his hand;
The law of truth was written upon his lips;
It stood as if it pleaded with men."

Within the limits of this brief biographical sketch of my revered friend, I cannot attempt any detailed account of his five notable pastorates, covering his public ministry of forty-two years. I have attempted a few paragraphs on the origins and the environment that moulded his childhood and youth, and the seven years Brockville foundation on which his subsequent ministry—covering a period of thirty-five years in four great churches—was built. In emphasizing the fact that his was preeminently a sermonic-ministry throughout the forty-two years of his public career, and that the pulpit was his "throne of eloquence," as Paxton Hood termed it, I wish to make it clear that Dr. Weeks loved sick visitation, and relieving the poor and needy, and calling on those who were anxious about their souls, or who were in spiritual difficulties.

For tenderness and grace in prayer, scriptural appropriateness, and chaste words at a funeral service, I think Dr. Weeks was without a peer. I have gone with him, on many occasions, "to the house of mourning," and he never once failed to be the true comforter. How eagerly he was sought for by the bereaved, and often by those who had little or no church connection, and no claim upon him save that of bleeding hearts yearning for a Christian comforter. For many years to come Dr. Weeks' funeral sermons will be treasured by those whose testimony is that of Hezekiah—"I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul."

Whomever Dr. Weeks "touched" during forty years "in life's throng and press," whether by conversion, baptism, marriage, church membership, sickness, restoration, or bereavement, never forgot it. I have met men and women in the Montreal hospitals who eagerly recalled the fact that Dr. Weeks married them, or baptized them, or buried their loved ones, or led them to Christ. And upon inquiry I found it often had happened from twenty to forty years ago. We call it a "gift," or "personality," or "affinity," or "personal magnetism." It was, indeed, all that, but it was more—it was "genius." Dr. Weeks was clearly a man of genius, and men of genius are very rare.

Dr. Weeks was my beloved pastor in the Walmer Road Baptist Church, Toronto. I sat under his ministry for five years (1895-1900) and served him as usher, personal worker, Sunday school teacher, B.Y.P.U. president, and mission worker. He was then in his very prime, and I but a youth, yet from the moment of our first meeting our souls "were knit together as one man." I can "feel" his two hands upon my shoulders now—as firmly as I felt them thirty-two years ago, and I can "see" his tall form and handsome face, and those speaking eyes, and I can "hear" him say—with that soft, pleading, yet commanding voice—"I want your help in the work here, and I'm going to count on it." I know personally of ten men who were led into the Baptist ministry by Dr. Weeks, during his ministry at the Walmer Road Church, and I was talking with a prominent Baptist minister recently who told me that he personally knew of twenty. His method of preaching was "Spurgeonic," and yet in a mind perfectly unborrowed and all his own. He fed his audiences week by week with "the three-pronged

fork," and he loved to analyze texts. I have three old notebooks crammed with his sermon texts, divisions, pithy paragraphs, and headings of anecdotes, and lines of poetry, covering five years. And every sermon was an exposition of the eternal divine thought. The Bible was to him "The Book." He was neither priest nor philosopher, but messenger and proclaimer. He knew philosophy, and he knew how philosophies came and went. All the wisdom of the world was to him contained in the Bible, but his business was to apply the Bible to life. His whole passion was to bring Bible truth into effective contact with the sinful soul. His desire to get at men's souls simplified his speech. He sought to give truth an edge, and to bring everything to a definite point—even the surrender of the will to God, and the life to his purpose and plan. He preached only triumphant certainties. He was intensely orthodox, and he contended eloquently and earnestly for the old faith. But he was absolutely free from hate and rancour, and he had no taste for religious wranglings, and bickerings over non-essentials or theological theories. He did not seek to restate the doctrine of the atonement or inspiration; he believed that by expounding the New Testament as it stood, the Holy Spirit would send the truth home to the souls of men. He was, to use his own illustration, like the man who, when asked to expound what God is, replied: "I know if I am not asked." He was never separated from his brethren in Christ whatever "school" of thought or interpretation or criticism they belonged to. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." That was ever his attitude, and that explains why he never "broke" with his

friends, although he held firmly on his own way in quiet and unquestioning belief.

I have said nothing of his lighter side, his wit, his humor, his tender sympathy. I have said nothing of his wonderful camaraderie (I have never met a man so intensely loyal to his comrades—especially those of long standing). I have said nothing of his love of God's great out-of-doors, and birds, and flowers, and animals, and angling, and hunting. He was, indeed, an all-round man and he lived a full life among his fellows. And yet there was always an element of seriousness about him, and he was never so soul-happy as when preparing and preaching sermons. His printed sermons will long continue to guide and help all those who love the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God. I would like to apply to him the tribute offered to another preacher of the everlasting gospel, who also "being dead, yet speaketh." "He spoke to those pierced with an anguish, 'whose balsam never grew.' He spoke to the cravings, aspirations, hopes, sorrows and pains of sinful humanity. The generations to come will care precious little for our clever and witty 'sermons for the times,' but they will listen to the sweet, clear voice of the man who preached to the end of Gilead, and Beulah, and the Gates of Day."

REV. CHARLES GEORGE SMITH, B.D.

Temple Baptist Church, Montreal, Quebec.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Song of Solomon 6: 10—Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

To the Jewish eye Palestine was the glory of all lands; Jerusalem was the glory of Palestine, and the Temple was the glory of Jerusalem. Around that sacred city and holy temple clustered the deepest love, the sweetest memories, and the fondest hopes of Abraham's seed. No matter how far the Hebrew wandered from his native land, or how magnificent the city in which he dwelt, whenever he bowed the knee to Israel's God he turned his face toward Jerusalem and the Temple. To him at least the city of the great king was beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth. When carried away into bondage, it was not the memory of his scattered fortune, nor his slaughtered sons, nor yet his own captivity that caused his deepest grief, but by the

rivers of Babylon he sat down and wept, he wept when he remembered Zion. Nehemiah, though fed with dainties from the king's board, grew pale and haggard with sorrow of heart, because Jerusalem and the Temple were trodden down by strangers. But Palestine and Jerusalem and the Temple were but types—dim shadows of more glorious things to come. The true Palestine, the real Promised Land, is the new earth wherein righteousness is to dwell. The true Jerusalem is the New Jerusalem which is one day to come down from God out of heaven; and the true temple is the redeemed church, God's dwelling place on earth.

Our text for this morning has reference to the bride, the church, and to Christ, the royal bridegroom. There is one respect at least in which the New Jerusalem differs from all other cities. Her glory is prophetic, while theirs is historic. They point to a past magnificence, she to a coming glory. Theirs is the glory of the evening star, telling of a day that is gone; hers is the glory of the morning star, heralding the rising sun. Theirs is the last flower of autumn, withering in the winter's breath; hers is the first flower of spring prophetic of the coming summer. Let skeptics scoff at the church if they please, and ridicule the slowness of

her growth, but the day is hastening on, as fast as the wheels of time can bear it, when the church of Jesus Christ will stand before the universe as the marvel of all marvels. God puts time into his masterpiece. Great things grow slowly. It is the mushroom that matures in a night, but it takes centuries to complete the oak. The church is God's unfinished work, and except to himself it doth not yet appear what she shall be. By the church I do not mean any particular denomination of Christians, nor all denominations combined, but the whole believing host from Abel on to that coming day when the last of the elect is gathered into the fold.

There are just two points that I want to stress for a little while this morning, and they are The Bride's Position and The Bride's Portrait.

1. *The Bride's Position.* Just as the mariner must first determine his position on the sea before he can shape his course toward the desired haven, so must we understand our true relationship to Christ before we can make real progress toward his likeness.

In the first place, she is the object of the bridegroom's choice. I put that first in my sermon because it is first in the divine plan. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," is the emphatic

declaration of Jesus himself. Of course, there is a sense in which we have all chosen him, and our first religious experience is our voluntary acceptance of the crucified as our Saviour. But the grip of our faith upon him was only the response of our hearts to the grip that his love had laid upon us. If you ask me when he made that choice I cannot tell you. I know that it was before the rocks turned back the sea waves or the day star found his place; I know that it was before the foundations of the earth were laid or the pillars thereof were set up. Ask the angels and the first created of them all will tell you that, before he had being, Jesus had chosen the church to be his everlasting bride. The foundation of our assurance is not the shifting sand of our choice of Jesus, but the solid rock of his choice of us.

Not only has he chosen us, but he has done so with a full knowledge of all our imperfections. Earthly brides are often led to the altar because of their ability to assume virtues which they do not possess, and to conceal defects that are all too real. Many men and women have pledged themselves in a lifelong covenant of marriage, who, had they known the inner life of the other would have preferred the shroud to the marriage dress, and the coffin plate to the marriage ring. But it

was in no such ignorance that Christ chose his people. He knew the human heart in all its depravity and love of sin. He knew how often we would fall, and how far we would wander from the path of virtue, and in spite of all these he loved us and chose us. We often smile at the folly of the woman who marries a drunkard to reform him, but if she can win his love she can cure him of any wickedness. Jesus does not demand that we first reform, and after that he will choose us for his own, but he takes us in all our wickedness and waywardness, and then he loves us out of the pit of corruption. Not one of us knows all the potential evil that dwells in our hearts, but he does, and loves and chooses us notwithstanding.

There is a story told of an English gentleman who came to this country years ago, and made the acquaintance of a beautiful maiden. Mutual friendship ripened into mutual love; he made an offer of marriage and was accepted. As the marriage day drew near an old colored woman called on the bride-elect and asked her if she had told her lover the history of her family. She replied that she had told him all that she knew about it. "Did you tell him that your grandfather was an escaped slave?" At first the statement was

repudiated as absurd. Then the old woman produced evidence that proved beyond all dispute that there flowed in her veins the blood of a bondman. With a breaking heart she sent for her lover and gave him back his espousal ring, begging that he would ask for no explanation. But he insisted on knowing the cause of her strange conduct. Then she told him of her frightful discovery. "And is that all?" he asked. She replied that it was, but surely that was sufficient. Then he handed her back the ring, saying, "I knew all about that before I asked you to be my bride." Busy gossips had taken care to give him the information that was withheld from the bride herself. Sometimes Satan brings up out of your heart and mine hidden evil, some undreamed-of baseness, and we think surely the bridegroom will now cast us off. What we all need to remember is that Jesus knew all the inmost baseness of our hearts, and chose us notwithstanding all. Simon Peter thought it would be impossible that he could ever deny his Master, but Jesus knew that he would and made provision for his cleansing.

Further, we need to remember that Jesus chose us with a full knowledge of what we will become. Who knows the upward possibility of a human soul? Only he who made it and redeemed it,

and he declares that the whole world is not comparable with it in value. Calvary is God's bid for the church, and when at last his work in her is complete he will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. There are still many flaws in this rough block of marble on which the divine artist is working, but none of them can mar the final glory of his work. What that glory will be no finite mind has yet conceived. John the aged, facing the glory, with a heart so full of love that it dropped from his lips with every sentence, with an imagination so vivid that he could paint the heavenly city with its gates of pearl and its streets of gold; and could picture the abode of the lost with its quenchless flame and its deathless worm, was utterly baffled when he tried to picture the final glory of the redeemed church, and he could only exclaim, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Beneath one of the unbroken seals that mystery is hid. But when at last the seal is broken and the glorious bride stands with the bridegroom there is just one word that will express the feelings of all, and that word is "satisfied." The Father will be satisfied, for then his righteousness will shine forth with undimmed glory, while his grace will be the theme of every tongue. The Son will be satisfied, for he will

then see the fruit of his soul's travail and rejoice in the perfection of his bride. And the Spirit will be satisfied, for he will then see in the perfect church the full fruition of his work. And the church will be satisfied, for she will not only see the King in his beauty, but she shall be like him. Aye, and she will be satisfied with the way she was led from the pit of corruption to the place beside the throne. And when the glad song of redemption, "Unto him that loved us and loosed us from our sin," breaks with exultant gladness about the throne of God, the angels will be satisfied, for they will see completed the things that today they desire to look into.

In the second place the bride is the object of the bridegroom's care. In the fourth verse of the chapter from which I have selected a text the bridegroom exclaims, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse." Jesus does not choose us and then leave us to care for ourselves. Every step from the dawn of grace on to the noonday of glory he both guides and protects us. When a man takes a bride unto himself he gives his pledge to provide for her and protect her. We view with contempt the man who in a day of adversity forsakes the woman to whom he gave his pledge at the altar. Shall we suspect the Son of God of

such unworthy conduct? He stands between us and all the forces arrayed against us. Sorrows may often touch our lives, but he will permit no evil to come nigh our dwellings. Sometimes God's trains run through dark tunnels and over foaming cataracts, but they never run off the track, and they are always on time.

Add to the fact that Christ has chosen us and protects us that other truth that he loves us, and we have the threefold cord that can never be broken. Love is not a theme for oratory, but for meditation. If instead of arguing about it we would sit and let its great truth sink into the heart, our fears would vanish, and we would know by a blessed experience that he giveth songs in the night. We must ever remember that both his choice and his love are personal. He only loves his church because he loves every individual in her. It is one thing for a father to say, I love my children, and quite another for him to take one child on his knee and say, "My boy, I love you." Have you ever stood on the shore on a moonlight night and looked upon the light as it came to you across the waves? Did it not seem as if the moon was shining only for you? On either side of you it was dark, and a stream of light was poured down at your feet. But your

companion a few yards further down the beach had a similar stream poured down to him. Even so all the love of God is poured into each believing life. Why God should love you or me we may never know, but looking on the Christ and his sacrifice the love should never be doubted.

II. *The Bride's Portrait.* Let us view the picture as it is drawn by the pencil of the Holy Spirit himself. My text does not give the bride's estimate of herself, nor yet the picture made by some flattering artist, but a true portrait as she appears to the bridegroom. In the opening part of the chapter we have a portrait of the bridegroom as he appeared to the bride. She says, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. Thy hair is as a flock of goats as they appear from Gilead. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep as they go up from the washing; as a piece of pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks." To this the bridegroom replies: "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair

as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Briefly let us consider these features.

First, she looketh forth as the morning—how hopeful! There is always a tinge of sadness in the sunset. The dying day brings somber thoughts to the soul. But hope is born with the sunrise. On the wings of the morning she flies to the sick on their weary couch, bearing to them comfort if not healing. The star of hope should always shine on the brow of God's child. A despondent Christian is a palpable contradiction. Pessimism in the church is more than a mistake; it is a sin. Those of us who are looking for the return of our Lord as the only cure for the world's ills are sometimes called pessimists by those who understand neither our creed nor our hope. Pessimists indeed! We stand in the front rank of the optimists. We believe that the golden age is before us, and that no power of earth or hell can keep us from its glory.

We are charged with teaching that the gospel dispensation is a failure, while, in fact, we believe it to be a magnificent success. It was inaugurated for the gathering out of the church, and it will be continued until the last of the elect host is gathered together in Christ. Is that failure? If

England sends an expedition into Africa to liberate a company of enslaved citizens, and if it returns bringing every man, woman and child safely home, will you say that it was a failure because it did not conquer every African tribe, and plant the British flag on every rebel stronghold? The Jewish dispensation was not a failure because it failed to provide a blood that could cleanse from sin; nor was the first advent of our Lord a failure because he went back to his Father without having received the throne. No more is the dispensation of the Spirit a failure because it will end without seeing the world converted to Christ. He will accomplish the mission on which he was sent, and prepare the way for the coming of the King. As well say that the beautiful blossom is a failure because it passes away to make room for the golden fruit, or that the shell of the acorn is a failure because it perishes in giving birth to the oak, as to say that this dispensation is a failure because it does not end in universal salvation. But someone may ask, Do you not teach that the world is going to the devil? Nothing of the sort. We believe that the world went to the devil some six thousand years ago, and that it will only be brought back to God when the "Stone cut out of the mountain without hands" smites the great

image and makes it as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and itself becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. So, like the morning, we look forth hopefully toward the final triumph of Jesus.

Not only is the morning hopeful, but it is aggressive. Watch the day dawn. At first a few stray rays of light are shot across the eastern sky; then great, black clouds roll up and shut out every ray, until it looks as though the night had won a victory. But suddenly the shafts of the sun are shot clear through the shield of darkness, and the day has come. So, too, the church moves forward. Heresies within and opposition without are but clouds that may for a moment obscure the face of the sun, but they cannot, even for a moment, hinder his progress. There is a wonderful majesty about the coming of the day. No pealing thunder heralds its approach. Without bustle or confusion, on noiseless wings, but as irresistible as the incoming tide, it advances. So, too, will the church move onward, wearing on her brow the morning star of hope, and holding in her hand the torch of truth until the day dawn and all the shadows flee away.

The morning is prophetic, too. The old sailor, watching the dawn, will tell you what the noon

will be. The children of God are the prophets of the day of Christ. We belong to an unborn age; we are citizens of a kingdom that is yet to come. By our lives we are to reveal to the world some rays of the coming glory. Those principles that are absolutely to dominate the coming age are to be seen in you and me. When we are dominated by love and joy and peace, longsuffering, gentleness and goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, then will the unsaved seek to share our blessings.

In the second place, she is fair as the moon. Here the figure changes and our attention is directed to the beauty of the bride. In all ages poets have sung of the beauty of the moon. Like the moon, the church shines with a borrowed splendor. In herself the moon is but a dead, cold mass. It is only as the rays of the sun fall upon her that she becomes supremely beautiful. When the earth cannot see the sun the moon reveals his glory. The church is the great reflector. Her glory is not in herself, but in catching the rays of the Sun of Righteousness and pouring them down into a world of darkness. In all her phases the moon is beautiful. Whether we see her face full and shining, or but a crescent in the western sky, the eye is charmed by the vision. And the

church of Christ is beautiful; whether in the full light of Christian joyfulness or in the shadow of some great sorrow, she is to him the chiefest of ten thousand and the altogether lovely.

She is clear as the sun. Here we have the thought of her purity. The world may see many flaws in us, and we may see many flaws in ourselves, but to the bridegroom, robed with his righteousness, she is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God looks at us through the spotless Saviour and he beholds no iniquity in Jacob and no perverseness in Israel. God sees us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we will be when we are presented before the throne as a chaste bride having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing.

Finally, she is terrible as an army with banners. Here the figure changes again and we are given a glimpse of the church as she will appear to the godless world. For long ages she has been despised and rejected of men, but the day is coming when the church shall judge the world. Before her onward march all the powers of earth shall quail, and her glory will fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. Church of the living God, thine is a glorious heritage. The splendor of Egypt and Babylon, of Greece and Rome will

fade and pass away, but through eternal ages all intelligent creatures will rejoice in the splendor of thine achievements.

Bride of the Lamb awake, awake,
Why sleep for sorrow now?
The hope of glory, Christ is thine,
A child of glory thou.

See, see, the night is waning fast,
The breaking morn is here;
And Jesus comes with voice of love,
Thy drooping heart to cheer.

Then weep no more; 'tis all thine own,
His crown, his joy divine;
And sweeter far than all beside,
He, he himself is thine.

4. White - Arranged in groups of white.

White - white in color.

There must be some for white.
Lying there it is before them
at home?

The word for a wedding
day "white" is the song
of Mary and the Lamb?

We sing "O Promise me,
Bride be ever dearer to
me than ever I before."

II

THE GUEST CHAMBER

(*A communion sermon.*)

Mark 14: 14—The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber?

John Bunyan tells us that when Pilgrim came to the Palace Beautiful they put him to sleep in the Chamber of Peace, the windows of which opened toward the sunrising. There he rested for a time, and then continued his journey toward the Celestial City; but the memory of that experience in the guest-chamber of the palace remained a consolation and an inspiration to the end of the way. For our Lord and his disciples the upper room in Jerusalem was the guest chamber, from the windows of which they saw the gleam of the coming morning. And what the upper room was to them, this communion is to you and me. Here for a little while we lay off the garments of care and the shoes of weariness, and in the loose robe of mutual confidence and fellow-

ship we are girded for the tasks of the coming days.

We all try to have in our homes at least one guest chamber. It is a room consecrated to friendship and fellowship. When it is occupied by a person we really love, the guest chamber rules the whole house. Go to the cook in the kitchen, the maid in the drawing room, and the mistress as she supervises the household, and you will find that each one is consciously or unconsciously ruled by the one who occupies the guest chamber. The food that he is known to like is prepared in the kitchen; the flowers that he prefers decorate the table; and the subjects that are known to be agreeable to him are discussed during the meal. The guest chamber is really the throne room, and its occupant is the crowned king.

We are gathered this morning in the guest chamber of the church; but let us remember that the figure is oriental rather than occidental. With us, the guest chamber is simply the room in which the guest sleeps, while in the oriental home it was where the host received his friends, and where they had communion and fellowship together. Within this house the Master sits today, and we are here to feast with him on the bounties he has provided. I do not think there is anything that

gives greater pleasure to a host than to know that his guests really enjoy the things he spreads before them.

If one wanted to enter the field of speculation and gather flowers of fancy, he would find ample scope in the narrative from which I have selected our text for this morning. Where was this upper room, and who was the man who owned it? How came it that the room was made ready before it was asked for? And how did the owner know there would be just thirteen in the company? How comes it that the man who furnished the room for that last Passover and that first Communion celebration was not included among the guests? These and many other questions might be asked; but answering them does not come within the scope of my purpose this morning. Mine is a simpler, and a sweeter task. One does not need to know how the food was gathered and prepared in order to enjoy a dinner. We are here today as invited guests, and we are asked to take and eat and drink and be satisfied. Only those are excluded who exclude themselves. Only the Master of the feast has the right to challenge the one who ventures to enter without having on the wedding garment.

We have before us a month of strenuous activity. The Christmas season is in many respects the

most trying of all the year. Before facing it let us spend an hour with Jesus in the guest chamber, and feed our souls on the bounties he has provided. There are seven things for which the Upper Room stands, and these seven lessons we need to learn today.

1. The guest chamber is *Where Christ Meets With His Own*. This is not a matter of interdenominational communion nor of church communion, but of communion between the individual soul and Jesus Christ. They and they only have a right to partake of these emblems who really discern in the bread and the cup the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. Paul declares that they eat and drink unworthily who fail to discover the body and blood of Jesus in the emblems. When my thoughts are centered on my crucified Saviour I will have no time to criticise others. I have known people to get up and go away from the table because they detected a Judas about to partake. There was a different spirit in the eleven when they were told that there was a betrayer in their midst. They did not each point at the other and ask, "Is it you?" or "Is it you?" but each one asked, "Lord, is it I?" The light that shines from the cross is a light that shines down into our

own hearts, revealing our own sin, and making us love him who bore its penalty on our behalf.

A Sunday school teacher took a class of boys into Saint Paul's Cathedral to show them Holman Hunt's great picture, "The Light of the World." One little fellow asked his teacher why Jesus was carrying a lantern. "Why," she replied, "in order that he may find the latch." In that she was mistaken; for if you will look closely into the picture you will see that the rays from the lantern fall, not on the latch, but on the face of Jesus. The only value of these emblems is that they direct our thought to him who loved us and washed us from our sin in his own blood. The only person I feel disposed to criticise this morning is myself. I feel as Watts did when he wrote,

"While all our hearts and every tongue
Join to admire the feast,
Each of us cries with thankful heart,
Lord, why was I a guest?"

"Why was I made to hear thy voice
And enter while there's room,
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"

II. In the second place the guest chamber is *Where Christ Cleanses His Own*. Those men who were with him were tired and dusty from the

toil of the day, and the owner of the upper room had provided the basin and the water and the towels for the washing of the feet of the guests; but not one of the company was willing to perform that menial service for his brethren. You will recall that a little while before they had been wrangling among themselves as to which of them was the greatest in the company, and as the servant in the home who washed the feet of the guests was considered the humblest of all, there was not one of them willing to take that place. Then the Master girded himself with the towel, and took the basin of water and began to wash the feet of these lowly Galileans. In performing that service he was not only washing the dust from their tired feet, but he was also washing the pride and the selfishness and the meanness from their minds and their hearts.

We have all been going about in the world for the past month, and I suspect we are all more or less conscious of defilement. We have had unholy desires, and we have entertained unbrotherly feelings, and we have done un-Christian things, and the host, and the host alone, can remove the dust and the stain. If we will but enter into the meaning of this ordinance this morning he will create in us clean hearts, and renew within us

right spirits, and he will lead us into the way that is everlasting. I cannot, and I am sure you cannot sincerely believe that at the price of Gethsemane and Calvary he purged my heart of every sin, and then continue to entertain therein an unbrotherly feeling toward someone else. I remember once asking an old Irish woman who had come on board our ship at Queenstown to sell her linen, how she managed to make it so white, and she promptly replied, "Sir, that is natural bleach." I was still ignorant, and asked her to describe the process. She replied, "After it is woven I lay it on the grass. The rain soaks it and the sun dries it; again it is drenched by the dew and dried by the sun, and at last it becomes as white as an angel's wing." If we want our souls made white we must purge them with penitential tears, and warm them in the sun of Christ's gracious love.

Of the royal gardens in Holland it used to be said that if one spent an hour there his garments would be fragrant for a week. Of this I am sure that if in the true spirit of this ordinance we spend an hour with the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley the fragrance will be with us during all this month, and people will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. During the great agitation for the emancipation of the slaves in

England there was one member of Parliament who had bitterly opposed the bill. When the vote was taken, to the amazement of all, he voted for the emancipation bill. When one of his associates asked him how the change was brought about he promptly replied, "I spent last night with Wilberforce."

III. In the third place, the guest chamber is *The Place Where the Traitor Is Unmasked and Expelled*. For more than three years Judas had passed muster as a genuine disciple, and no one seemed to suspect him. I am not sure that even Judas had suspected himself before that time. It was the light of sacrificial love that revealed to Judas the baseness of his own heart, and sent him out into the night. Jesus was careful to guard Judas from the suspicion of his other apostles. Judas confessed his traitorship when he got up from the table and went out into the night. Neither you nor I need anyone to stand up and accuse us of our sinnership when we take in our hands the bread and the cup of this memorial feast. Jesus did not order Judas out, neither did the other disciples cast him out, he went out of his own accord. The longer I live the less sympathy do I have with heresy trials, and accusations against our brethren. The only accusation that

does much good is that which arises in our own hearts. We denounce Judas for betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver when we ourselves betray him for less. It is betrayal of our Lord, whether we sell him to the high priest, or whether we deny his lordship by misrepresenting him before the world. Up to a certain point the sin of Simon seems to me just as black as that of Judas. The difference appears when Simon turns from his baseness back to his Saviour, while Judas casts down the silver at the feet of the priests and then goes and commits suicide. Peter believed even his threefold denial forgivable, while Judas did not believe there could be forgiveness for his betrayal. But there was, and Jesus would have as gladly forgiven the betrayer as he did the denier.

IV. The upper room is *Where Jesus Teaches His Own*. After washing their feet he said, "Know ye what I have done unto you?" Then he added, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." We have not mastered the full meaning of this ordinance until we have learned, not only what Jesus has done unto us, but also how to do these things for others. It is much pleasanter to feel that our sins have been purged away by Jesus than it is to make the cleansing of someone else our business. When he said, "I

have given you an example, that ye should do to one another even as I have done unto you," he was laying down the rule that was to govern us in our attitude toward other people. He knew how meanly they had been quarreling that very day; he knew that Judas had already been bargaining to sell him, and that in a few hours Simon would deny with oaths and curses that he had ever known him, and that in the supreme crisis they would all forsake him; and yet he treated them with the same loving consideration that he would have given had they been all loyal and loving.

There is one sure way to transform an enemy into a friend, and that is to treat him as a friend. I think Jesus broke the heart of Judas when he permitted him to kiss him without smiting him for his baseness. It was the look of patient love on the face of Jesus when he turned and looked on Peter, that sent him out to weep bitterly. Brethren, believe me, here at this table we may find a weapon with which to vanquish every foe and transform him into a loyal friend, and that is sacrificial love toward those who hate us. The old saints who lighted up the Dark Ages were men who read little but they communed much. They dealt more with the Master and less with the servants. The thing that gives Jesus his pre-

eminent place in the world is not his peerless teachings nor his mighty miracles, but his love for all, and peculiarly for his foes. If ever the church really learns the full meaning of the guest chamber and puts its precepts into practice, she will soon win the world, and she will know what it is that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.

V. The guest chamber is *Where Christ Comforts His Own*. Seldom has there assembled a sadder company than those who gathered that night in the upper room. They saw the hope that had sustained them for more than three years—the hope of seeing their leader crowned and the hated Roman driven from Jerusalem—suddenly shattered, and they themselves about to be left as sheep without a shepherd, in the midst of ravenous wolves. There was not a star in their sky, nor a ray of light to pierce their gloom. Then in utter forgetfulness of his own approaching ordeal he lifts their thoughts above the present moment and tells them of a land that is fairer than day into which he is going to lead them, and of a wonderful city of mansions where they are to have their home. He told them of the coming of another Comforter who would be always with them even unto the end. This is the rainbow that he weaves through our black clouds, and makes

even our Gethsemane but a way to glory. Over this table there always bends the bow, and while one end rests in the garden the other reaches into the glory. Here today we see the evening star sinking into the darkened west, but we also see the morning star melting into the brightness of heaven.

“Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing,
But oh the joy when I awake
Within the palace of the king;
And I shall see him face to face,
And tell the story, saved by grace.”

VI. In the sixth place the guest chamber is *Where Christ Brings Us to the Father*. As he was about to leave his bride for a time he placed her in the keeping of his Father. He did not leave us to the mercy of our enemies, nor lay upon us the obligation to protect and provide for ourselves, but he placed us in the keeping of that same almighty Father who had cared for him from his babyhood in the manger to his sacrifice on the cross. I recall this morning a marriage at which I officiated some years ago. America had entered the great war, and the youth of the land were going to the front. The young couple decided to wed before they separated. It was a strange marriage with more of tears than smiles. Immediately

at the close of the ceremony and while congratulations were still being extended, a military officer entered the room, and, laying his hand on the shoulder of the bridegroom, spoke a few words to him. The young husband turned to his bride, kissed her again, and then handed her over to his father, saying, "Take care of her, Dad, till I come back." Then to the bride he said, "Never mind, dear, we will have our honeymoon when I come home." This is just what Jesus did in the guest chamber that night. In that company which he placed in the keeping of his Father, you and I had a place as surely as did Peter and James and John. This morning he is waiting even more eagerly than we are for that day when he can return for us and we shall be together forevermore. Then we will sit down, not to the memorial supper, but to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

VII. Finally, the guest chamber is *Where Christ Glorifies the Commonplace*. What a simple meal it was! Just a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, the ordinary everyday fare of the common people. Look at it this morning—just a tiny bit of bread and a sip of the blood of the grape, and yet for eighteen hundred years uncounted millions of men and women have feasted their souls because they have been eating with the King.

There is much that appears commonplace in the daily routine of the work of the church, but it will cease to be commonplace when we discover that he is in our midst, and that we are laborers together with him. Any place is glorious if the King is there, and any service is splendid if performed for and with him.

“Amidst us our beloved stands,
And bids us view his pierced hands;
Points to the wounded feet and side,
Blest emblems of the crucified.

“If now with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs, but see not him,
Oh, may his love the scales displace,
And bid us see him face to face.”

III

ASLEEP IN GETHSEMANE

Mark 14: 37—Simon, sleepest thou?

When we enter Gethsemane we are surely standing on holy ground, and we do well to put our shoes from off our feet while we gaze upon the matchless sufferings of the Son of God. In all that wondrous life of Jesus, from the night when the angels announced to the shepherds his birth in the Bethlehem manger, on to that other night when the angel came down and rolled away the stone from the rock-hewn tomb in Joseph's garden, the most mysterious incident was the agony in Gethsemane. About its cause and its character men have speculated for well-nigh two thousand years, and still the mystery remains unsolved. During the earlier hours of the night he was in the midst of his disciples; and in all the recorded utterances in the upper room there is not a hint of depression. He spoke most cheerfully of his home-going, and urged the disciples not to let

their hearts be troubled. He closed the meeting in the upper room with a prayer that was full of confidence and comfort, and went singing from the upper room into the garden. Reaching the entrance of Gethsemane, he left eight of his disciples as an outer guard, while he, with the other three, went in among the trees. Placing the three as a kind of inner guard, he went a little further and fell to the ground in an agony of soul.

What caused that sudden revulsion of feeling, and wrung from his lips that bitter cry, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," we are not told, but we may be quite certain that a mere shrinking from the death that awaited him had no part in it. He had known for a long time that the Cross stood at the end of the path he was walking, and he never shrank from it. He knew that he was going to be betrayed before he left the upper room, and still he went confidently forward. There were probably a number of things that combined to overwhelm him. The face of the Father was hidden from him, and he was treading the winepress alone. Mr. Spurgeon has suggested that he thought he was about to die in the garden, for he exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto dying." Had he died then, it would not have been a voluntary laying down

of his life for the sin of the world, and, therefore, not an atonement. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews seems to suggest that, when he says that in the days of his flesh "with strong cryings and groanings he prayed to be delivered from dying, and was heard in that he feared." In that case the prayer in the garden was answered, and he was given strength to go on to Calvary and there make a complete atonement for sin.

It is not my purpose to try to unravel the mystery of Gethsemane this morning, but to study that other mystery of a disciple sleeping while his Lord was in an agony of suffering. This is a peril that confronts each one of us, and that call, "sleepest thou?" is as much meant for you and me as it was for Simon. I will arrange what I have to say under three heads, viz., The Condition, The Call, and The Consequences.

I. *The Condition.* Remember Simon was not, like Judas, plotting to betray his Master, nor had he any intention of giving him over to the hands of his enemies. Had anyone suggested such a thing Simon would have drawn his sword and fought for his Lord. Had someone asked him how it came that he went to sleep in the garden he would probably have answered, "I did not intend to go to sleep, but everything was so quiet

in under the trees, and danger seemed so far away, that I just closed my eyes for a moment, and the next thing I knew was the voice of my Master calling me to awake."

I am sure that is true of about ninety per cent of the sleeping Christians today. They are not hostile to the gospel, they reverence the name of Jesus, and they are glad when they hear that his cause is prospering. But business and domestic life are strenuous, and it is so easy to let the Sunday evening and the mid-week service go by, and to drop out of the Bible school. Of course, they do not intend to abandon the church and her work, but just to take a little nap and then awake for a more vigorous service. It requires no effort for a tired person to go to sleep. Just fold the hands and close the eyes and nature will do all the rest. Satan well knows that in the service of Jesus a sleeping Christian is as useless as a dead one. Indeed the one who is asleep may be a greater menace than the one who is dead, because others may be depending on the sleeper, but no one depends on a corpse. Just here let me remind you that the sleeper who is a real hindrance to the cause of Christ is at the same time a great helper to Satan. A wakeful devil is mightier than a sleeping saint. When I hear people saying that

they can find nothing to do for God, I am sure they are not awake.

In the second place, I am quite sure Simon would have argued that there were others watching. The outer gate was in the care of eight disciples, and they would give an alarm if an enemy appeared. But the fact remains that Judas and his band got by the outer guard. I wonder how many parents there are here today who are trusting the salvation of their children to the Sunday school worker. I grant you that these are as fine a company of men and women as you will find anywhere in this land, but their service will not atone for our neglect. What a protest would go up if it was suggested that we close our Bible school and the mid-week service! But if it were done quietly, more than fifty per cent of the members of our evangelical churches would never discover it unless someone went to them with the news. Believe me, brethren, as surely as Jesus wanted Simon to watch, even so does he want you and me. It is a shame when we make the faithfulness of others an excuse for our doing nothing.

I am wondering if Simon would not also have asked, "What use was there of my keeping awake when James and John were both asleep? I have done quite as well as they have, and why should

I be singled out for censure?" There would be some force in that, if watching against Judas and his band was the supreme need for keeping awake. What a comfort it would have been to Jesus if, when he came back he had found Simon wide awake, and doing his best to prevent the others from going to sleep. I occasionally meet people who excuse their neglect of the services of God's house by saying, "I would never be missed if I were to stay away." Missed by whom? You might not be missed by the minister or by the deacons or deaconesses, but you would be missed by him who agonized in the garden for you, and who has asked you to watch with him.

II. *The Call.* When the first great paroxysm of sorrow was passed, Jesus came to the three men and found them all asleep. Then he spoke to Peter in the words of our text, "Simon, sleepest thou?" There were, I think, three reasons why he singled out Simon.

In the first place, I think he meant "Simon, sleepest thou—thou who hast been so highly favored?" From the very first, Jesus had taken him into the inner circle of his disciples, and had bestowed on him special favors. Simon had been with him on the mount of transfiguration, and Jesus had accepted of his declaration, "Thou art

the Christ," as the foundation stone on which his church was to be erected. It seems like a double crime for one to fail who had received such special favors. Need I make the application today? Who have been more favored of God than the Baptists of this beautiful city of Richmond, or the membership of Grace Church? Living in a Christian land, reared in Christian homes, and surrounded with a thousand special privileges, and yet we are put to shame by the devotion of those who are living in the midst of the superstition and the cruelty of Africa and Asia. When I read of what missionaries endure in heathen lands without murmuring, and of their zeal to carry their testimony into still darker regions beyond, I wonder how our Lord must grieve when those upon whom he has bestowed his richest benedictions are sleeping while he is agonizing over the lost children of men.

In the second place, I am quite sure that he meant, "Simon, sleepest thou—thou who hast been so clearly warned?" Just an hour or two before, Jesus had told him that he was on the way to an open denial. We might wonder how the thing was possible, were it not that the same has too often been true in our own lives. I am not opposed to special services in connection with Christmas and

Easter, but let us be exceedingly careful or we shall soon drift into the formalism that characterizes the Church of Rome today. With our forty days of fasting and our holy week celebration we are losing sight of the fact that our obligation is to be awake all the time to our duties as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. To holy men and women every week is a holy week, and the keeping of the body in subjection to the Spirit is a duty that belongs to three hundred and sixty-five days, and not merely to forty days. Brethren, let us be careful lest our sleeping be the cause of someone else sinking. The supreme peril to the mariner is not the massive iceberg that stands up cold and defiant, but the sunken derelict that is floating level with the surface of the sea. The sunken rock can be located and marked with a lighthouse or buoy, but the waterlogged hulk drifts from place to place and is a perpetual menace. Brethren, let us see to it that our lives are not submerged in the sea of worldliness, but that we stand forth as a warning to those who are in peril.

In the third place, I believe Jesus meant, "Simon, sleepest thou—thou who hast made such loud professions? Simon, did you not vehemently assert but an hour or two ago, 'Though all men

forsake thee, yet will not I. I will go even to death with thee'?" Most of us have, in the most suggestive and beautiful symbol in the world gone down and been buried in a liquid grave, and have come forth again in the likeness of our Lord's resurrection. That was indeed our profession of faith. Some churches call it the sacrament of baptism. A sacrament was an oath of allegiance. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we repeat the oath of allegiance to him. Let us see to it that we honor our own oath. Something more than a wedding ring is essential to a true marriage, and something more than a mere ceremony is essential if we are to get the real joy and blessedness of our Christian faith.

III. *The Consequences of the Sleep.* Just look for a few minutes at what followed this sleep of Simon, for the same thing will follow in your life and mine if we sleep when we should watch.

In the first place, he lost a coveted opportunity. I am of the opinion that deep down in his heart Simon wished for an opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty. One can almost hear him say, "The Master has declared that I will deny him this night. Oh, for an opportunity to prove my loyalty!" Brethren, it is easy to be brave before the enemy has arrived, and easy to defeat him before

we have come to grips with the foe, but it is quite another thing when the enemy lays his hand upon us and we feel the real power of the temptation. Drowsiness is such a subtle thing, and its coming so silent that we are captured and bound before we are aware of its presence. Had Simon foreseen the far-reaching effect of that one brief lapse he would rather have died than yielded to the feeling of drowsiness. Many other opportunities to bear his testimony came to Simon in after years, but that one was gone forever. When Simon looked into the face of his Master he saw the face crimsoned with the gory sweat.

In the second place Simon was not only losing a coveted opportunity, but he was on the way to a deeper sin. Follow the course along which he marched to his lowest degradation and note the steps leading to that awful plunge. The first was boasting; the second was sleeping; then followed the smiting of the servant of the high priest; next he followed afar off; later he sat down among the enemies of Jesus; and finally he denied with oaths and curses that he had ever known him. Thus Simon went step by step from sleeping in Gethsemane to denying with oaths and curses that he had ever known the Lord. There are many people just like him today. Time was when they stood

in the front rank of the followers of Jesus. Then they relaxed a little and dropped to sleep; later they went step by step downward until today they openly deny all his claims. They blame the other members of the church, and they lay the blame on everyone except themselves, where responsibility belongs. John also slept in Gethsemane, but after that sleep he aroused himself and went into the judgment hall with his Lord. My brother and my sister, even if you have been sleeping let the call of the Master arouse you this morning, and begin today, like John, to atone for past neglect by a new consecration of yourself to Christ.

Finally, there was for Simon a terrible awakening. 'Just when he had completed the third denial, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. That one look revealed to him his baseness, and he went out and wept bitterly.' Jesus had told him that Satan desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat, and then added, "But I have prayed for thee." That was the last touch that brought the denier to himself and led him to a new resolve. Brethren, I hope it may not be your lot or mine to fall into Satan's sieve as Simon fell. Remember, if you are a child of God who is neglecting to bear a true testimony, God will not permit Satan to have you, but he will permit you to fall into

Satan's sieve, and those who fall there have a terrible awaking. I am thinking of a man I knew well some years ago. He was a nominal Christian, but dropped out of the work of the church. From being superintendent of the Bible school he dropped out altogether, and instead of being in his place in the house of God, he spent his Sunday mornings on the golf links or in the club house. The family prayer was abandoned and the children went their own way. He had one son, the darling of his heart. The boy had seen his father drinking and gambling in the home. He quietly acquired the habit, and one day when the police raided a disreputable dive in the city the son was found there in a drunken stupor, and was hailed to court for gambling. That father had fallen into Satan's sieve and was sifted, but, like Simon, he still carries a sore heart because his neglect of his Christian duties led to the downfall of the child.

IV

COMMUNION LOST AND RESTORED

Luke 2: 43—Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

There is a silence that is more eloquent than speech. Great truths are assumed without argument. You will search your Bible in vain for any argument to prove the existence of God. He is before the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, which reads, "In the beginning God." The silence of scripture on any subject does not mean that nothing can be said, but that nothing needs to be said. A great truth carries its credentials on its face. The silence of God may be a great argument in support of the gospel of his grace.

One of the strongest arguments in support of a vicarious, rather than simply an ethical, gospel, is to be found in the silence of scripture in reference to the first thirty years of our Lord's earthly ministry. If, as our modernist friends would have us believe, Jesus is merely an example, show-

ing us how to live, and how to form correct habits, we should have been given a minute account of his childhood and youth, because it is in that period that our habits are chiefly formed. By the time we have reached the age of thirty we are just a bundle of habits that are almost impossible to break. But of that period between his infancy and baptism at the age of thirty, we are told practically nothing. Luke is the only New Testament writer to break the silence, and only in one connection. His purpose was to give us a record, not only of Christ's official utterances, but also of his official acts.

The law of the Hebrews required that every male child, at the age of twelve, should go up to the Temple to be enrolled as a son of the law. It was in connection with this official act of his that the incident occurred, from which I have selected our text for this morning. Undoubtedly Jesus was a great teacher, but he made his ethics the fruit and not the root of salvation. When Nicodemus addressed him as a great teacher, our Lord replied, "Ye must be born again." That was his way of saying that religious conduct must be preceded by spiritual birth. We meet the Saviour first at Calvary and not at Bethlehem. It is under

the Cross that we are enrolled as learners in the school of Christ.

It is not on the silence of scripture that I want to speak this morning, but of an experience that came to Mary and Joseph—one which I fear may come to you and me. In its essence Christianity is a personal fellowship between the soul and God. In this it differs from all other religions, for they place an almost impassable barrier between the soul and the object of its worship. Augustine expressed a great truth when he said, "Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in thee."

One of the hardest truths for us to realize is the personal presence of Jesus with us all the time. During the forty days after his resurrection he frequently appeared in the midst of his people, and in no case did it appear as though he came from anywhere else. We often speak of him as coming into the upper room through the closed door, whereas he was in there all the time. The miracle was not in his passing through a closed door, but in his showing himself unto them. We frequently call to a Jesus who we think is beyond the stars, while in fact he is standing beside us. If we do not see him it is simply because the eye of faith is closed. He is with us always, and when

we believe that promise of his we walk with him in blessed fellowship.

The experience of Mary and Joseph had its spiritual counterpart in the lives of many of us. We have days of sorrow and nights of dread, because we miss the comradeship of our Lord and our Saviour.

The two heads under which I will arrange my remarks are *Communion Lost* and *Communion Restored*.

I. *Communion Lost*. At the very outset let me remind you that there is a difference between the loss of communion and the loss of salvation. Salvation is one thing; and the joy of salvation is another. When David prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," he was thinking, not of future peril, but of present need. Joy is the normal condition of a truly religious life. But it is possible to have a religion that is like a waste, howling wilderness, or a land where there are no trees nor flowers nor singing birds. A joyless religion is Joseph and Mary tramping back across the miles that lay between them and Jerusalem, and wondering how it has fared with the boy. A joyful religion is Mary with Jesus in her embrace, facing toward Nazareth again. A joyless religion is the lost sheep out in the desert alone,

hearing the baying of the wolves but seeing not the form of the shepherd. A joyful religion is the sheep back in the fold with the hand of the shepherd laid caressingly on its head. I wonder if there is a soul here today who has a heart as heavy as that of Mary when she awoke to the fact that Jesus was not with her. Let me tell you how it happened that she lost him, and it may save some of us from a similar grief.

In the first place, she and Joseph assumed too much. They supposed that he was in the company. I am told that in those pilgrimages to Jerusalem it was the custom for the people from one town or village to form a group, after the pattern of our modern picnics. The fathers and mothers would form one group, and the young men and women another, and the children yet another. In this way Mary and Joseph went on with the older people, taking it for granted that the boy was with the younger ones. What no money could have bribed them to do was accomplished by assuming too much. I would not suggest for a moment that there was anything improper in their conduct. It was their first day on the homeward journey and there would be so many interesting things to talk about, and each would want to tell of the wonderful things that

he or she had seen in the great city. Jesus was such a reliable boy, they could trust him anywhere, and so the whole day was passed without their having met him at all. How perfectly this fits into the experience in your life and mine. There are so many things to occupy our attention. You business men are simply driven by competition in this strenuous day. You wives and mothers are occupied from morning to night with cooking and sewing and keeping the home in order. The young people have their sports and their companionships to fill up every hour, so that there is really no time for actual communion—no opportunity to see the face of the Master. We do not have to step aside to some sinful practice in order to miss the presence of Jesus—we have simply to neglect him. If we loved him as we ought, we would soon be conscious of his absence. The fact that we can go a whole day without seeing his face or hearing his voice is the thing that wounds him most deeply. Of course, the student in the university wants to keep his room attractive, and he ought to want to excel on the campus, and enter into all the social life of his class, but he should never forget that these are merely incidental, and that graduation at the head of his class ought to be his ideal.

In the second place, Mary and Joseph put too much dependence upon other people. They supposed him to be in the company. There is a widespread tendency to take our religion secondhand. We profess many things, not because we have experienced them ourselves, but because someone else has told us their experience. We talk about the joy of full consecration because Dr. A. J. Gordon and Dr. F. B. Meyer and others tell us of the experiences through which they have passed, and not because we have tasted that joy ourselves. It would do us all good to go through our articles of faith and see how many of them bear the trade-mark of other people. You can always detect the second-hand garments worn by the tramp. The coat wrinkles across the shoulders, and the sleeves are either too long or too short. The trousers either come only to the boot-tops or are dragging under the heels, and his shoes do not fit. Every article that he wears may have been made by skilled workmen and of the finest material, but they were not made for *him*. It is high time that we refused to be spiritual paupers, and insist on having our own Christian experiences. As a boy I used to read much about Niagara Falls, and was deeply impressed by what others said of that wonderful cataract. But a day came when I stood

by it myself, saw that magnificent torrent as it poured into the great abyss, listened to the mighty thunder of its voice and saw the mist shot through with rainbows. All that I had heard from others was as nothing compared with the thrill as I gazed on the scene for myself. Let us erase from our creeds all second-hand experiences, and believe only that which our own faith has demonstrated. When, like Paul, we can say, "I know whom I have believed," we are in the position of both peace and power.

In the third place, let me remind you that it was not till night was falling that they discovered their loss. The caravan had come to its halting place, and the various families began to pitch their tents and make preparation for the evening meal; and then, for the first time, they discovered that the lad was not with them. It requires no very vivid imagination to picture them going from tent to tent, from company to company with the question, "Have you seen Jesus?" As each one replied in the negative, the darkness and the fear deepened, until they had reached the border of despair. Whether they left at once for Jerusalem, or waited until the morning, we are not told, but I am quite sure that, whether on the road or in their tent, that was the darkest night Mary

and Joseph ever passed through. Brethren, we may pass along through the day of prosperity and health, without greatly missing the Master, but there is a night coming, the night of sorrow and sickness and loss when we shall need the comfort which only the presence of Jesus can furnish. It is an awful thing to face the night of death without our Comforter and our Guide. It is hard enough to walk down to the brink of the Jordan, leaning on the arm of the beloved, but, oh, the unspeakable horror of stumbling onward through the darkness alone, without his presence to shed a gleam across the dark waters.

I am not insinuating that your life is wrong, or that you are living in open sin. All I want to emphasize is that our lives may be as clean and wholesome as those of Joseph and Mary, and yet, if we are not conscious of the presence of Jesus, death will mean to us an hour of sorrow and loss. Jesus is a sensitive lover, and he withdraws from those who go on contented without him. You remember how it fared with the two men who were going to Emmaus. When they reached their home Jesus made as if he would pass on, and it was only when they constrained him that he went in to abide with them. When to our need we add our desire for him, then will he abide with us

indeed. The very darkness becomes light about us, and the evening hour becomes the sweetest of all, when we make Henry Francis Lyte's prayer our own,

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
Oh, thou who changest not, abide with me."

In the fourth place, I want to remind you that when Mary and Joseph missed the presence of Jesus they put the blame in the wrong place. Listen to Mary as she rebukes him, saying, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Had he been less filial and gracious he might have replied, "How is it that you left me alone in the great city and went a whole day's journey without even missing me?" One of the very strange things in the religious life is that for every failure on our part we try to put the blame on someone else. We neglect the prayer meeting because we do not like someone who takes part there. We absent ourselves from the Lord's table because we think we

see the face of a Judas among the company sitting there. We desert the house of God because we do not enjoy the preacher, or because the members did not greet us with the cordiality we had expected. Brethren, I never knew a religious scold who was not a backslider, and I have seldom found a backslider who was not also a sulk or a scold. Should I turn away from my friend's home or table because I do not like the servant he employs? Let me tell you of one thing which you never saw. You never saw your own shadow while your face was toward the sun; but if you turn your back toward the great king of day your own shadow will always darken your path. Turn the eyes of your love toward the bridegroom of your heart and there will be no longer shadows darkening your pathway. If you are without the conscious presence of the Master, then there is no one to blame but yourselves. You may scold him, and you may scold your brethren and sisters, but the fault is in your own heart of neglect. It is said of Elizabeth Barrett that one reason why she was determined to wed Robert Browning, and why she eloped with him, was because her father and her friends were so bitterly opposed to him. The failure of other professed followers of Jesus

to live up to the Christian standard should be an added reason for our devotion to him.

II. *Communion Restored.* I wonder if I am speaking this morning to any who, like Mary and Joseph, have awakened to the fact that they are out of touch with the Master. They no longer feel the old joy that gladdened them in the house of God, and they go from week to week through a dreary routine of religious observances without the thrill that comes to those who are in fellowship with the King. Like Job of old, you are saying, 'O, that I knew where I might find him.' Let me commend to you the conduct of Mary and Joseph.

In the first place, they decided to make a restoration of the old fellowship the first thing in their lives. They abandoned the company and determined to retrace their steps to the city. Of course, there were those who laughed at their excitement and assured them if they would go to their rest the boy would turn up all right in the morning. He had probably joined some other company, and would find his way back to their tent in due time. But, brethren, these comforters had not the hungry heart that beat in the bosom of the virgin mother. If you are conscious of the great lack this morning, then put everything else

aside and make the discovery of the Christ the first business of the day.

In the second place, let me remind you that they found him just where they left him. I cannot say just where you lost the gladness of your old religious fellowship. Some of you probably left it in the prayer meeting, when the cares of life and a wearied body led you to neglect the assembling of yourselves together. Or you may have left it in the Bible school when you passed on to others the work of leading the children to Christ. Possibly you left it in the secret chamber where you used to hold personal communion with God. But I need not go on multiplying possible places. Your own memory will remind you of the times and places when and where you enjoyed the fellowship of your Master. Of course, Mary and Joseph had a sorrowful night; but have you thought of the loneliness of Jesus when he found himself deserted by his mother? However much Mary wanted to find Jesus, he was even more eager to find his mother. In the place where they left him he waited all night until they returned to find him.

In the third place, they found him about his Father's business. There is a tone of surprise in his question, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist

ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" What he implied was that there ought to have been no need of seeking, as they would find him in his Father's house, about his Father's business. On one occasion Talleyrand asked a friend if he knew how to play whist. Receiving a negative reply, that brilliant Frenchman answered, "What an unhappy old age you are preparing for yourself." I can conceive of something infinitely more depressing than not to be able to play games, and that is to have the desire to play, and no one with whom to play. Those who have Jesus for a friend will never know loneliness, for the very essence of comradeship is for two lovers to be together alone.

Finally, having found him, there was an end to their sorrow. It is true that they were separated from their other companions in the homeward march; but what of that when they had Jesus for their companion? What I am pleading for this morning is the renewal of your old-time fellowship with your Master. Let us get back with him, and then our hearts will burn within us as he talks with us by the way. There will be no loneliness when the shadow of sorrow and bereavement and death settle around us; but we shall find the night filled with stars, and our

days a benediction. Then we shall feel as did the bride in the Canticles when she exclaimed, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

V

OVERSHADOWING CLOUDS

(*A communion sermon.*)

Luke 9: 34, 35—There came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

In biblical imagery, clouds have a conspicuous place. Across the sky of human history they have drifted since that day when, on the one that poured the deluge upon the earth, God hung out the bow of a gracious promise. With a pillar of cloud God guided Israel from bondage to freedom—from Goshen to Canaan. It was in a cloud that God came down to talk with Moses on the summit of Sinai. It was in a cloud that Elijah was taken up into heaven, and Jesus passed through a cloud from Olivet to the right hand of the Father. David speaks of them as the chariots of Jehovah, and Nahum says they

are the dust of his feet. Out of the clouds God waters the parched fields, and in them he weaves the bow of an everlasting promise. When our present dispensation has run its course, in a cloud Jesus will return to receive his people unto himself.

This morning I want to speak to you of the clouds that from time to time overshadow the lives of God's people, that we may learn, if we can, the message that they bring. Clouds never come empty-handed, and if we do not receive their blessing the fault is our own. On the mount of transfiguration the disciples were terrified, but in after years that mountain experience became a great inspiration. In all ages the messengers of sorrow have perplexed the people of God. Both saints and sinners have marveled when the loved of Jehovah have been subjected to adversity. David tells us that he almost lost his faith when he saw the saints in their sorrow while the ungodly had an abundance of material prosperity. This is no new experience. Abraham and Joseph, Moses and Elijah, and all the prophets had their seasons of sorrow and suffering. So dense was the cloud that settled over Calvary that Jesus exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Reason has no answer

to give to this question. Only faith can kiss the hand that holds the rod, and declare in the midst of the tempest, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." When God would give to Abraham a supreme revelation of the coming glory of Israel, he first caused an horror of great darkness to enwrap him.

Because there is always much of sorrow in the world, a sermon for the comforting of the saints is never out of place. What I have to say I will arrange under three heads, viz., Overshadowing Clouds, Overwhelming Fears, and Overflowing Revelations.

I. *Overshadowing Clouds.* I will not enter into any idle speculation about that wonderful event on the mountain side. Of the exact time and place we are not told. It was probably at night, because it was the custom of our Lord to retire in the evening to some secluded place for prayer and meditation, and we know that he was praying when the transfiguration took place. Moreover, the disciples who were with him were asleep at the beginning of the great scene. Then, too, the cloud that terrified them was bright and shining. There would be nothing startling in a bright cloud at midday, but at midnight it would indeed be

startling. If, as I believe, this was none other than the shekinah cloud that guided Israel through the desert, then we know that at night it seemed to be a pillar of fire.

In the first place, I want you to notice that this terrifying experience came to the very choicest of the apostolic band. Peter and James and John were of the inner group who stood nearest to the Master, and yet it was to them that this terrifying experience came. Whatever else it may mean, our passing through a cloud is no evidence of the divine displeasure. It is as true today as it was in the days of Isaiah, that God chooses his people in the furnace of affliction, and to us there is no greater mystery in the world than the mystery of the sorrows of the saints. We still wonder that Potiphar's wife should revel in luxury while Joseph languishes for years in an Egyptian dungeon. Why should Pharaoh live on the fat of the land while the loved of the Lord toil under the crack of a taskmaster's whip? David is chased like a partridge on the mountain, while Saul, the rejected of Jehovah, continues to live in a palace. The infamous Jezebel has an ivory palace in which to live, and is fed on the dainties of the land, by the hands of royal servants, while Elijah the faithful sleeps under a juniper tree, and has his food

served to him by unclean birds. While Herod is fattening on the spoils of Canaan, the Son of the Highest is nailed to a Roman cross and given wormwood and gall to drink when he thirsted.

I do not pretend to be able to explain all the meaning of sorrow, but I am certain that when we reach the end of the way we shall all be ready to exclaim, "He doeth all things well," and we shall know that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." The differences in our experiences are determined by the fact that we are designed for different places and services. I know of two boys, children of the same parents. The one was kept continually at school, while the other was permitted to go or not as he pleased. The one was intellectually brilliant, and was designed for a conspicuous place in the world, while the other was both mentally and physically deficient, and had at most but a few years to live. The difference in their treatment was not determined by the love of their parents, for they were both tenderly loved, but by the difference in the careers before them.

In the second place, let me remind you that the cloud came not only to the choicest of the disciples, but it came while they were actively

engaged in the Master's service. One of the first questions to leap to our lips when we see the cloud coming is, "What evil have I done that led God to send this sorrow to me?" We have come to associate all pain and disappointment with divine displeasure. What we all need to know, and what we find so hard to realize is that God is never angry with his people, and that love guides every providence that touches our lives. Most of us can believe that God laid our sin on Jesus Christ and put it away in that great sacrifice at Calvary; but how many of us really believe him when he says that all things work together for our good? If we really believed that, then we would welcome our clouds even as we welcome the sunshine of prosperity. Jesus himself said, "Every branch in me that beareth fruit he purgeth—pruneth—it, that it may bring forth more fruit." When the pruning knife cuts into some loved branch it does not mean that the vine-dresser is displeased with the fruit we bear, but that he is pleased with it and desires a yet more abundant cluster. Sorrow is the ordaining hand of our great High Priest ordaining us to serve. It is said that when first they shut John Bunyan up in Bedford jail he used to stand before his barred window, looking out on the crowds that were passing and to whom

he desired to preach, and in the bitterness of his soul pray that God would open the prison door and let him out to proclaim the gospel to the multitude. I am sure that today John Bunyan is glad that God did not answer his prayer in the way that he desired it answered, but that he shut him up to the writing of his immortal allegory. The things that we can do are the things God wants us to do, and it is for a larger fruitage in that field that he is preparing us now.

The third thing that I want you to notice in connection with the clouds is that they are passing things. It is the blue sky with its sun and its stars that abides, while the black clouds come and go. Too many of us are like Simon Peter and want to make booths and abide under the cloud. I have known people who nursed a sorrow as tenderly as a mother nurses her first-born. They cling to their grief even as the ivy clings to the wall. They remember every affliction, while they forget a thousand benedictions. They keep anniversaries of all their afflictions. Call on them today, and with mournful tones they will tell you that so many years ago mother died. Go a little later and they will inform you that so many years ago a dear child went to heaven. They always remember the date when they went to the hospital,

but they have quite forgotten the morning when they came out. They forget that for every stormy day we have a score of fine days, and that the storms have brought us richest blessings. Instead of asking, "What evil have I done that God sends me this package wrapped in black?" let us receive it from his hand and ask what new mercy there is in this gift from our Father.

II. *Overwhelming Fears.* "They feared as they entered into the cloud." Just what it was that they feared we are not told, but I do know some things that we fear when sorrow comes our way.

With some of us it is the fear that God has forsaken us. Satan is always ready to whisper this into the troubled heart. He will dig up some old transgressions and flaunt them before our faces and then tell us that God has grown weary of our sinfulness and cast us out from his presence. How terrible he can make this appear every tried soul knows. What we need to know is that God is never nearer to his people than when they are passing through some sore trial, and he never loves us more tenderly than when our hearts are almost broken with sorrow. Very little is said in the Bible about God's presence with his people in the times of prosperity. Of course he is there,

but then we have no doubt about it. Even Satan cannot make us doubt our Father's goodness when the sun of prosperity falls upon our pathway. But when the storm comes, then he puts his arm about us and assures us that we need fear no evil. He was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego all through their sojourn in Babylon, but it was only when they were cast into the fiery furnace that his presence was supremely manifested.

"Is it true, O Jesus, Master,
That the highest suffer most?
That the strongest wander farthest
And most hopelessly are lost?
That the mark of rank in nature
Is capacity for pain?
That the anguish of the singer
Makes the sweetness of the strain?"

"Is it true, O gracious Father,
That the fulness yet to come,
Is so infinitely glorious
That to know would strike us dumb?
That could we but for a moment
Pierce our gaze beyond the sky,
With these poor dim eyes of mortals,
We would just see God and die?"

A second fear that enters the soul is that no good can possibly come to us through our affliction. As the workman is willing to toil if only he is assured of his wages at the end of the day, so

most of us, I think, would be willing to bear our sorrows if only we could see where the blessing is that follows. One of the remarkable things about God's treatment of his children is that he does not always state what pay we shall receive for our service, but he does promise an adequate remuneration—a remuneration which will satisfy us when it is received. Most of us have heard that old story of the Russian Czar who disguised himself as a poor beggar and went through a certain section of the city asking for alms. Some received him kindly while others repulsed him. Later he again passed through the same streets in his royal carriage and rewarded each man according to the treatment which he had received in the garb of a beggar. If we treat sorrow as a friend it will bring us a friend's compensation; but if we treat it as an enemy we shall receive only an enemy's recompense. Thrice blessed are the men and women who can see the hand of God behind the shadow that darkens their pathway.

A third danger, when we are under the cloud, is that of resorting to unworthy methods in our endeavor to escape therefrom. Sometimes we do questionable things, and then try to excuse ourselves by saying that we were sorely tried at that particular time. A man is being pressed by his

creditors, and excuses some dishonest act by declaring that he had to do it to escape bankruptcy. Or we may be in some close corner, and lie to save ourselves from exposure. What the merchant needs to remember is that dishonesty is worse than bankruptcy, and that to be condemned for the truth is better than to be acquitted by a lie. To hold fast our integrity in the midst of the storm is to win a place among the great in the kingdom of heaven. The blackest cloud that ever overshadowed the earth—blacker than that which emptied the deluge on the world—was the cloud that gathered about the brow of Calvary; but our Master kept his gaze on the empty tomb that lay beyond it, and went forward without faltering, because he was sure that the recompense would be adequate for all the sorrow he endured.

“Be master of the clouds,
Let them not master thee;
Command the sunshine to thy soul
However rough the sea.

“Soon shalt thou know the flush
Of happy, radiant days;
For he who trusts God in the dark
Is taught new songs of praise.”

III. *Overflowing Revelation.* “There came a voice out of the cloud saying, this is my beloved Son, hear ye him.”

In the first place, there was the revelation of our Lord's deity. Up to that time they had been thinking of him simply as a great religious reformer and teacher, like Moses and Elijah; but now they discover that he is very God of very God, and that he is able to deliver in every time of trouble. Blessed is that sorrow which throws us back completely on the deity of our Lord. A young Englishman, the son of a wealthy society woman, was sorely wounded in the Great War, and in the end lost his right arm. During his time in the hospital his mother abandoned all her social rounds and with tenderest care ministered to her boy. Sometime later a friend was sympathizing with him because of the loss of his arm, and he replied, "Thank God for the loss of the arm, for it was through that loss that I found the heart of my mother." Any sorrow is blessed, if through it we find our divine Saviour.

In the second place, it was while under the cloud that they discovered the new and larger meaning of Christ's mission. He talked with Moses and Elijah, and the subject of their conversation was the death he was about to undergo at Jerusalem. It is when Jesus delivers us from some great and crushing sorrow and brings us out into a large place that we discover that he is more than

a great teacher—he is a divine deliverer. Sorrow and disappointment are the pick and spade with which the Holy Spirit makes a reservoir in our hearts for the coming in of the Christ himself.

Finally, it was while under the cloud that they discovered Christ's place in the unfolding of the divine plan. They had in the past been listening to Moses and to Elijah, but now these great leaders and teachers have passed, and "hear ye him" is the final commandment. Let us not try to interpret Jesus by Moses and Elijah, but let us interpret Moses and Elijah by the teachings of Jesus. Jesus did not reject the teachings of Moses and Elijah as though they were false, but he gave us a spiritual interpretation of their acts and their utterances. The law and the prophets were as empty vessels until Jesus filled them full. That is what he meant when he said in the sermon on the mount, "Not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away until all be fulfilled." Fulfilled literally means filled full.

In a few minutes we are coming to the table of our Lord, that was first spread amid the blackness of denial and betrayal, desertion and death. Let us bring all our sorrows here, and mingle them with those of the Man of Sorrows, and as we eat the bread and drink the cup, let us not forget the

fruitage that the world has gathered from that great scene of suffering.

“By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,
We'll keep the memory adored,
And show the death of our dear Lord,
Until he come.”

VI

THE GREAT RECOVERY

Luke 15: 3—He spake this parable unto them.

On other occasions I have spoken to you on the story of the prodigal son and the elder brother, but tonight I want to take the whole parable, for the fifteenth chapter of Luke is but one parable with three distinct pictures. It is a single window with three distinct panes through which we may look, and through each one we get a different view of the Redeemer at work. Each story is but a part of one great mosaic. As the touch of Midas turned everything to gold, even so does the touch of Jesus make everything clear. His mind is the electric current that transforms the black carbon into a luminous flame. He makes beacons out of the common things of life, warning us of rocks and shoals and pointing us to sheltered harbors. To glorify God and to save men were the two great purposes that dominated his life. Neither fascinating bribes nor frightful threaten-

ings could swerve him from his chosen work. They first offered him a crown and afterwards threatened him with a cross. One day the leaders of the people were fawning at his feet, and the next they were hurling at him their anathemas; but, in his pursuit of the mission on which he was sent, he was as changeless as the law of gravitation, and as irresistible as the flooding tide.

From the fifteenth chapter of Luke we learn how far-reaching was the influence of Jesus. He was attracting to himself the very outer fringes of society. The outcasts of humanity, the publicans and sinners were flocking to him, and he received them as graciously as he received the scribes and the Pharisees. It was this that enraged the religious aristocrats. They could not see beneath the rough raiment, and the coarse garments of these plebeians offended their refined tastes. Jesus looked deeper and saw the men and women. To him the outer covering was merely incidental, while the inner character was essential. It would be a mistake to think that Jesus was hostile to the Pharisees. It was pharisaism, the outer veneer of pride and arrogance, and religious formalism that he repudiated. The modern attempt to arraign the rich against the poor, and make Jesus the champion of the latter, has no warrant in

scripture. It is quite true that he is the friend of the poor man, but he is equally the friend of the rich. To him sin is the same, whether it be in the heart of a millionaire or a pauper, and virtue in calico is as beautiful as virtue in satin.

The mission of Christ and the mission of the church are identical. They are both seeking to solve the great social, commercial and political problems of today by producing a race of godlike men and women. So long as sin reigns in the human heart so long will cruelty and dishonesty remain. I want you to look with me into this parable and learn, if we can, both how souls are lost, and how lost souls may be recovered.

I. *The Lost.* Looking closely into the first part of the chapter we learn that souls go astray as sheep go astray; that is, just through heedlessness. The sheep does not deliberately plan to leave the flock and the shepherd; it does not have a quarrel with the leader or with its companions; it has not chafed under the restraints laid upon it and made a dash for liberty. It went out to the pasture in the morning and began to feed with the others, giving no thought to anything except its own pleasure. Its eye rested on a dainty patch of clover, and although it lay in a different direction from the way in which the shepherd was leading,

there would be plenty of time to have a feast and then return to the flock. But the clover was sweet and it was abundant, and the sheep pitied its companions who, in their zeal to obey the shepherd, were missing the green clover patches. Just beyond the clover patch there was a cool and inviting spring, and the sheep decided it would run thither and slake its thirst before returning to the flock. But the pool was under a shady tree, and it would be delightful to lie down and rest for a while. When the sheep awoke it was hungry again, and still the sweet clover was near, and still it feasted and forgot the flight of time until the lengthening shadows proclaimed the approach of night. It must go now and join the shepherd and the flock. But where was the flock? It could no longer be seen. The shepherd was calling for the missing one, but it heard not his voice; and when the black darkness fell the sheep was alone in the desert.

It is thus that souls go astray from God. There are many men and women in the world today who have lost their interest in the things that are eternal, simply because other and lesser matters have come in and claimed their attention. Recently at a northern summer resort two little children were playing in a boat that was lying on the sand.

They did not notice the incoming tide that silently lifted the boat on her keel and then drew her out into the channel. An off-the-land breeze pushed them out into the bay, and then toward the sea, and at last when they were aroused they were so far out that their cries could not be heard. All night they were out on the deep, and all night frantic parents sought for the lost children. Next day a passing steamer picked them up and they were restored to their homes. They did not intend to be lost, they simply neglected the warnings of their parents and drifted away. Jesus says that in a similar way souls drift into sin, and become lost in the desert. Step by step they go a little farther until they are lost long before they awake to their peril. Time and again we are shocked to hear of some young man or woman who has plunged into shame and wickedness, and we think that the evil began there. But it did not. Long before, they took the steps that led them to their peril and destruction. Oh, young people, beware of that heedlessness that means the first step away from the shepherd's care.

Not only is the sheep lost through its own heedlessness, but its condition is that of utter helplessness. The sheep is one of the most defenseless of all living creatures. It is neither swift in

flight nor strong to fight. The smallest dog can soon worry the largest sheep to death. In his book entitled *Ideals of Jesus*, published shortly before his death, Dr. W. N. Clarke points out that while man's endeavor is essential to his salvation, it is not in itself equal to the task. However much men may loathe sin, there must come into the life a divine power before it can be conquered. If the lonely sheep out in the desert is ever to know the shelter and the comfort of the fold, the shepherd must go after it and bring it back. But it is equally true that the sheep must be submissive to the will of the shepherd. There is something splendid, but pathetic, in the spectacle of a man or woman struggling with evil propensities, and trying to achieve deliverance without the aid of the Good Shepherd. But it is a hopeless task, and sooner or later the soul yields to the enemy. It is said that when the Light Brigade made their memorable charge at Balaclava, a French officer who was a spectator of the charge was heard to exclaim, "It is magnificent, magnificent! but it isn't war." It was magnificent courage, but it was a hopeless task. One cannot but admire the men and women who, without Jesus Christ, are trying to live lives that are pure and true, but they have set themselves a

hopeless task. Only the Good Shepherd is able to find and bring home a lost sheep.

The second picture in this parable is that of a woman who has lost one of her ten pieces of silver. Let us keep in mind the orientalism of the text. The ten pieces of silver constituted the circlet placed on her neck on her marriage day, and corresponded to the modern wedding ring. But there was this addition, that a popular superstition declared that the loss of one of the pieces of silver was proof that the wife had been false to her marriage vow. Her reputation, but not her character, was at stake, and you can readily understand the zeal with which she sought for the missing piece. Can you not see her as she lights the candle, and goes about the little windowless room and sweeps out every corner and crevice where the lost coin may be lying? She shakes each mat and removes each piece of furniture, until at last her eye lights on the bit of precious metal, and with a shout of gladness she calls on her neighbors to rejoice with her in the recovery of the treasure and the vindication of her name.

This is the picture with which Jesus sets forth the seeking love of God. When the human race fell into sin all heaven was agitated. Satan had accused Jehovah of untruth and unkindness, and

Jehovah must vindicate himself before his intelligent universe. We sometimes hear it said that when man sinned God ought to have given him up to his doom. I am not so sure about that. The glory of God, as well as the salvation of a soul, was at stake. In the days of our Lord it was considered a supreme disgrace for a shepherd to lose a single sheep; and therefore for his own glory, as well as for the value of the wanderer, the shepherd went into the forest and across the desert to bring back the sheep that had strayed. The lost coin was silver, and therefore valuable, and the woman's reputation was precious to her and to her friends, and so she seeks for the lost coin until it is recovered.

Altogether too much is said about the worthlessness of human nature. It is in fact the most beautiful and the most precious thing that God has ever made. I met a gentleman in the North this summer who wore a beautiful gold coin on his watch chain. It was a rare old Spanish coin, and I asked him how he came by it. He replied, "One day I was digging in my garden and turned it up with my spade. It was covered with muck and corroded, and I concluded that it was simply an old rusty English penny, and threw it aside. Later I washed off the muck and began to clean

it to see if I could discover its date. Then I discovered that instead of being a copper coin it was pure gold, and because of its age it was of great value." We pass men and women by as worthless copper, but to God they are so precious that the cross was not too great a price to pay to purchase them. We do not know our own value in the sight of God, but he does, and he has not paid more for us than we are worth. You are precious to him whether you are to yourself or not.

The third picture is that of the lost son, and it carries us one step beyond the heedlessness of the sheep and the helplessness of the coin. In the story we have a glimpse at the real wickedness and the deliberate wandering of the sinner. The sheep lacked intelligence and the coin lacked ability, but the son revealed both. He knew what the father wanted him to do but he refused to do it. He knew what were his rights as a son and he claimed them. The father did not censure him for asking what was his own. Of course, you were created free and, of course, you have a right to use your freedom, but you are a fool if you squander what you ought to invest. I know of a young man who was left by his father one hundred thousand dollars to be paid to him on his twenty-first birthday. The day he reached his

majority he went to the executor and demanded his money. The executor pointed out to him how safely the money was invested and advised him to leave it there and draw only the dividends. But the money was his and he would do as he pleased with it. Within a month he had turned all his securities into cash and went on the stock market. In less than a year the last penny of his money was spent and he found himself in poverty. That is exactly what the prodigal did. His freedom was his own, but instead of leaving it in the care of God and drawing only its legitimate earnings he practically threw it away, and was reduced to feeding swine in his effort to secure food. But the father had not forgotten him, and when he turned his face home he was welcomed to his father's table and clothed and fed and even feasted. If there is one here tonight who has squandered his inheritance, the Father waits for your resolution to go home and, with the kiss of everlasting forgiveness, he will meet you down the way.

II. *The Recovery.* For just a few minutes let me turn your thought to the picture of the recovery of a lost soul.

In the first place, Jesus represents the lost as unable to save themselves. Indeed, this is the real

ground of his defense before the scribes and Pharisees. If, as we are being told today, humanity is in a state of evolution, and is gradually rising from the status of beasts to the standard of men and women, then the mission of Jesus Christ into the world was, to say the least, unnecessary. According to Paul, if there was a law given that could have given life, then certainly righteousness would have been by the law. According to its most ardent advocates, evolution is a law, and they tell us that this law is going to lift us all up until we attain to the standard of super-men and women. The only possible defense of Gethsemane and Calvary is found in the declaration of Peter after the resurrection, that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus. To argue that anyone can forsake sin if he chooses is fallacious, because the seat of the trouble is in the desires. Men love darkness rather than light. The wolf could leave the slaughter of sheep and live on vegetables if he so desired, but he cannot so desire. Only a miracle can change the nature, and nothing short of the miracle of regeneration can make a child of sinful Adam love holiness and hate iniquity.

In the second place, Jesus represents God as going after the wanderers because of their helplessness to recover themselves. The lost sheep will be devoured by the wolves unless the shepherd goes after it; and the lost coin will never find itself back in the necklace unless the woman searches for and discovers it. There is no need of a soul seeking for Christ, because Christ is seeking for it. Just where it lay, wounded and weak and ready to die, the shepherd came and lifted it on his shoulders and carried it back to the fold. Do you ask why he does not carry you back? Because you do not want him to, and you refuse to yield to him and let him bear you home. To carry you home against your will would not alter your attitude toward him, and you would soon return to the desert. If you are willing and obedient, Jesus will do the rest.

In the third place, according to Jesus, the recovery of the soul begins at the point of resolve to go home. I suspect that for a long time the prodigal knew that he had been a fool, and wished that he had never left the father's house. I am quite sure he often wished that he was back. Indeed, he began to hate the tyrant to whom he was bound. But at last all his wishing resolved itself into one great determination to cast himself on

the goodness of the father and, turning his back on the hogs, he faced toward home. He stepped into the way, and the next experience was the pressure of the father's arms about his neck, and the kiss of the father on his burning cheeks. This is the truth that I want to press upon you now. Religion is not primarily going to heaven, but returning to the Father. I think it is worthy of note that Jesus does not say that the son kissed the father. I suspect that the young man did not feel worthy of that. The trouble with so many is that they want the ring and the shoes and the robe and the feast before they will believe in the kiss of forgiveness.

In conclusion, let me call your attention to the closing scene in each incident. Each scene opened with sorrow and sadness. Not only was there a straying sheep in the desert, but there was a sorrowful shepherd seeking for it. There was a lost coin and an anxious woman seeking to find it. There was a poor prodigal in a far country and a hungry-hearted father looking down the way. But in each case the end brought rejoicing. There was a rescued lamb and a glad shepherd; there was a recovered coin and a singing woman; there was a son at home and a father rejoicing and a family feasting.

Those scenes might be repeated here tonight if only one soul would turn again toward home, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Who will start the music by coming forward to confess his or her sinnership, and cast himself or herself into the arms of the Father?

VII

VISION LIMITED AND ENLARGED

(*A communion sermon.*)

Luke 24: 16, 31—Their eyes were holden that they should not know him. . . . Their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

Astronomers tell us that our planet has two distinct movements, the one circular and the other onward. By the first it returns again and again to its original place in the system, and from what has been, we can know to a certainty what will be. When the sun drops behind the western hills we can tell to a minute when he will appear again above the eastern horizon. We can determine to a minute when the tide will begin to ebb and flow, and when the hours of daylight will begin to lengthen or shorten. But with the onward movement it is different. We do not know to what point in space our planetary system is speeding, and therefore we do not know what may happen on the morrow. Before tomorrow's sun rises, our planet may dash into a tragedy more terrible than

the deluge, or speed to a revelation more wonderful than that of the resurrection morning.

What is true of the planet on which we live is equally true of the people who inhabit it. We, too, have our circular and our onward movement. We move in the same circle in which our fathers moved. Like them, we are born and we live and we die. While the pattern of our lives may differ somewhat from that of the Pilgrims and the Puritans, the warp and woof are identical. We live the same life that our fathers lived, and like them we pass off the stage to make room for the generations that are following us. But there is an onward as well as a circular movement. The last twelve months carried us forward a year, but they have not carried us back to the starting point. We are all a year older this morning than we were twelve months ago. Our feet are standing this morning where no other feet have ever trod. Not only are we a year nearer to the end of the journey of life, where we are to lay our burdens down, but the world is nearer the time when, through its baptism of fire, it will be purified and made fit for the dwelling place of Christ and his people.

The setting of our text is familiar to you all. The tragedy of Golgotha had been enacted. For the handful of disciples the sun had gone down

behind the Cross, and disappointment and despair took possession of their hearts. There was indeed a panic among the followers of the Nazarene. Some hid themselves in Jerusalem, while others fled from the city to escape from the hands of persecutors. Two of them—Cleopas and probably Luke—took the road leading to Emmaus, a small town about eight miles from Jerusalem. With sorrowful faces, the index of heavy hearts, they were walking and talking of the terrible calamity that had befallen them. A stranger approached and ventured to ask the cause of their great depression. To this they replied, “Are you a stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not heard of the terrible thing that was done there? We had a wonderful teacher and healer among us, and the priests and officials conspired against him, and secured from Pilate a sentence of death against him, and the Romans crucified him two days ago, and we had hoped that it was he who was to free our nation from the dominion of Rome.” Then he called their attention to what the Scriptures had said concerning the Messiah, and how that he was to suffer, and then rise from the dead. By this time they had reached their home, and as they turned to enter the house Jesus was continuing his journey, when they constrained

him to abide with them, because it was toward evening, and the day was far spent. Then he tarried with them, and at the supper which was spread for them he continued the address, until suddenly they discovered who their companion was, and he disappeared from their sight.

Last Sunday morning I was speaking to you in reference to the extra which Christ calls for from his people. We shall never measure up to that higher standard until we recognize the personal presence of Christ with us all the time. Jesus was with those disciples before they knew him, and he remained with them after he had vanished from their sight. We are accustomed to speak of death as the time when the soul and God stand face to face. To some this may be their first conscious waking to the fact, but he is with us all the way. Jesus is our Immanuel, and Immanuel is "God with us" whether we see him or not. Christianity is the only religion in the world that brings God and the soul together at the beginning. Other religions make fellowship with the infinite the goal at the end of the way.

The two points that I want to dwell upon this morning are Limited Vision, and Enlarged Vision.

I. *Limited Vision.* "Their eyes were holden that they should not know him." It was the morning of the first Christian sabbath, and it gave birth to consternation among both the friends and the foes of Jesus. His foes were astonished, for the frightened soldiers had come with their story about an earthquake and an angel rolling away the stone and sitting upon it. Immediately they began to hatch their lies to explain away the loss of their prisoner, but they made no attempt to capture him. There was consternation among the friends of Jesus also. Had not the soldiers declared that the disciples stole the body, and would not imperial Rome take vengeance on those who dared to break her seal? For fear of this the disciples fled to hide themselves. Now, why were the eyes of these two men holden?

In the first place, their eyes were holden by a preconception or a prejudice. They had imbibed certain doctrines concerning the Messiah, and in those teachings there was no place for the Cross, and consequently no place for the resurrection. Prejudice is a weed that still grows in the Christian's garden, and unless we root it out it will sooner or later choke all our pleasant plants. Men are talking piously today about the finished revelation, but as a matter of fact there is no such

thing as a finished revelation. God has been and he ever will be unfolding and revealing himself to the children of men. There are some who seem to think that when we pass through the door of death we shall know all that is ever to be known of the grace of God. Paul did not think so, for he tells us that in the ages to come he will still be showing forth the riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Let me repeat what I said at the beginning. We are on an eternal voyage, and we must be prepared for the discovery from time to time of new islands and continents, new rivers and seas. Too many of us cling to old traditions with the zeal of the ultra Romanist. Because our fathers believed thus and and so, therefore it must be true; but our fathers would have been the very last ones to claim infallibility for themselves, and I am sure they rejoice to see their children stepping into clearer light. But do not think that I am offering a crumb of comfort to modernism. The modernist is the extreme traditionalist. Because he has conceived the idea that the universe is governed by law, and because he knows of no law that will explain the virgin birth, or the sin atonement, or the resurrection, or any of the miracles of our Lord, he is as blind to them as the first disciples

were to the resurrection. Beloved, let me remind you that the universe is not ruled by law, but by a loving God and Father who worketh all things according to the council of his own will. When we like people we can find a good motive behind their meanest acts, and when we dislike them we can see some contemptible intention behind their very best deeds. He is a great soul who can put his heel on his prejudice and give to his enemy the benefit of his doubt.

The second cause of their blindness was pure ignorance. Reading the New Testament today one wonders how it was possible for men to listen for years to the teachings of Jesus and not to realize that he was to be put to death and then rise from the dead. But that they did fail to realize that truth is evident from the fact that when he died, they abandoned every hope of ever seeing him again. Even the women who went to the tomb had no higher thought than to anoint the body for the last long sleep. It is startling to think that the enemies of Jesus were the first to realize that he had actually risen. Let me remind you of the equally startling fact that today the people who are opposing the doctrine of the virgin birth, and the blood atonement, and the resurrection, are not the openly wicked, but the

religious leaders in the colleges and churches. They are attempting to restore Eden to this world with the serpent left in, and it is doomed to failure. I have nothing to say against socialism as an ideal toward which we are to work, but we must have Christian men and women before we can have Christian socialism. When we can know of a certainty that every member of the church is born again, then we can have all things in common, but not until then. The apostles tried it very soon after Pentecost, and the case of Ananias and Sapphira revealed the folly and apparently ended the practice. There is an old English recipe for making rabbit stew, which begins by saying, "First catch your rabbit." I would say to those who are so keen about Christianizing the social order, first get your Christians. As well try to cure wolves of killing sheep by lecturing them on the advantages of a vegetable diet, as to make a Christian democracy out of unregenerated men and women.

The third trouble with these men was their absolute unbelief. They had heard the story of the open grave, and they had heard Jesus declare that he would die, and rise again, but because he had died, and all Israel had not been at once redeemed they could not believe even the testimony of their

own brethren as to the resurrection. What they ought to have done was to fit their theories into the new revelation, instead of trying to squeeze the new revelation into their old theories. Do you recall what Jesus said about putting new wine into old wine skins? Let us not make a similar blunder in our dealing with present-day problems. We should begin by believing that what Jesus Christ says is true, and then make our theories fit into the revelation. There are men like the late Dr. Clarke who tell us that Jesus did think that he was coming back to this world after his death and resurrection and ascension, but they assure us that in that case he was mistaken. It is true that he told us that before his return there would come a great apostasy, and yet there are those who tell us that Christianity is a failure because they see the apostasy coming. When Jesus told his disciples of that coming day of trial he added, "When ye see these things coming to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth night." Do you remember Isaiah's statement concerning Dumah, how the voice called, "Watchman, what of the night?" and the watchman replied, "The morning cometh and also the night." We are in the midst of the darkness just now, but the morning cometh for those

who believe and the night cometh for the unbelieving world.

II. *Enlarged Vision.* "Their eyes were opened and they knew him." I have spent so much of my time on the first division of my subject that I have time but to mention two or three outstanding things in connection with the second part. Let me remind you in the beginning that he was made known to them in the breaking of bread. Just how we are not told. It has been suggested that when he took up the loaf to break it they discovered that the hands had been pierced. Others have thought that it was through some peculiar manner in which he always broke the loaf. For us that is immaterial. The supreme importance is that to the eye of faith Jesus is always present in the breaking of the bread.

In the first place, they received a larger view of him. They had often heard him read the Scriptures, but now for the first time they discovered that he was the center of that wonderful volume, and their hearts burned within them as he opened to their wondering gaze his own portrait in all the book from Genesis to Malachi. It would be amusing if it were not so tragic to hear Dr. Myers assert that the Northern Baptist Convention cannot agree to gather about the Bible,

but they will agree to gather to the person of Christ. Some of us would like to have Dr. Myers tell us what he knows about the person of Christ except what he has learned from the Bible. Will he favor us with the names of the other historians from whom he has learned about this Jesus? Will you tell me where the light goes when you extinguish the lamp? I grant you that Jesus is "the Light of the World," but this Bible is the wick which the Holy Spirit has touched into a flame. Jesus himself says, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me." As Moses was preserved in an ark of bulrushes, so the Christ is brought to us in the narratives of this old Bible.

In the second place, they received a new interpretation of Christ's sufferings. To those two men who were engulfed in their sorrow because of the crucifixion he asked, "Ought not Christ to have suffered, and entered into his glory?" Let us not look at our suffering from the Cross, but let us look at our crosses from the empty grave. The cross is not simply a passageway into the tomb, but the experience of a pilgrim bound to glory. When we enter into the resurrection experience, and we may enter it now, then will our hearts burn within us as we link ourselves up with

the risen Lord. We have been using carnal weapons until the hands of faith are blistered and sore. Let faith grasp the cross and she can conquer in every conflict.

In the third place, they received a new inspiration for an old task. I do not know just what the hour was when the disciples made their great discovery. It was beginning to get dark when they went into the house. They had been there for some time, because they not only had supper, but Jesus had preached a sermon to them on the facts of his death and resurrection. Then suddenly he disappeared. It does not say that he left the room, he simply vanished from their sight. With the thrill of a new gladness in their hearts they at once thought of their brethren in Jerusalem, and out into the darkness they hastened, and again traversed that eight miles that lay between Emmaus and Jerusalem. But the miles did not seem long, nor the road rough, because there was a flame burning in their hearts and they wanted to share their joy with others. All that any one of us needs today is a new revelation of the risen Jesus and our hearts will burn and we will run without weariness to tell others of what we have found.

I was talking the other day with a musician who had heard Miss Talley sing in the auditorium. He was rejoicing over the performance. I asked him if she had any new notes. "New notes!" he replied. "Why, no, she did not need any new notes, for she performed miracles with the old ones." Brethren, there is the truth that we need to learn today. There is no need of any new revelation, but there is need of a new appreciation of the old one. When the heart burns the feet will run, and the tongue will tell with gladness the story of the risen Jesus. The story is told of one of the crusaders who was challenged to compete with a great Italian singer. They robed him in a court dress and he appeared on the stage accompanied by his friends. But in the singing of the first number he was completely outsung by his competitor. He then asked them to array him in full armor, place his sword in his hand and a cross where he could gaze upon it. They did this, and then he sang with such grace and power that the whole multitude acclaimed him the victor.

Let us gather at this table this morning, and, forgetting all else—our disappointments, our fears and our failures—meditate on the bread and the cup until our hearts burn within us. Then let us go and tell others and we will be irresistible.

The Master is here this morning, and let us not go hence until we have seen him.

“If now with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs, but see not him,
Oh, may his love the scales displace,
And bid us see him face to face.”

VIII

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

John 13: 34—A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you.

The story is told of a Scottish saint who used to disguise himself as a poor wayfaring man, and then visit at the various homes, seeking for a night's lodgings. One evening he came to the residence of a Scottish nobleman and asked for shelter and food. The master of the house took him and appointed him a place at the table with the servants. When the meal was over, the laird, as his custom was, took down the Shorter Catechism to examine and instruct the servants. After questioning several he came to the stranger and asked him how many commandments there were in the Bible. "Eleven, sir," was the prompt reply. "You are wrong," replied the master. "If you were a Scotchman you would know the catechism better than that." "I am a Scotchman," replied the stranger, "and I know that there are eleven commandments." The laird read over the Ten

Commandments and asked the stranger if that was not all. "Nay, nay," replied the stranger, "for the Master said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you.'" Then the stranger began to preach a sermon to the master and the servants on the text that I have chosen for today. After the discourse the master took the stranger into the mansion, where he preached every day till every member of the household became a follower of Jesus. I venture to say that we are all guilty of breaking the eleventh commandment. It is possible to obey all the other commandments and yet utterly fail in this one. On the other hand, if we obey the eleventh commandment we shall obey the other ten also. I believe most of you will agree with me when I say that the supreme lack in our lives is the absence of real love for all our brethren and sisters in Christ. It is quite true that we love some of them; and it is equally true that we hate others. Of course, we would not use that word, but we treat them just as we treat those we hate. I believe the sharpest thorns that pierce the heart of Jesus are our acts and words of unkindness toward those whom he loves and has purchased with his blood.

You are all familiar with that story of the Duke of Wellington just after his return from Waterloo. He had gone to Westminster Abbey to receive the communion. As he knelt before the altar a shabbily-dressed man came and knelt beside him. Shocked by what appeared to him as a piece of insufferable impertinence, an officious verger put his hand on the man's shoulder and told him to withdraw. Noticing this, the duke laid his hand on the arm of the laborer and told him to remain. Then turning to the verger he said, "Let him remain. In this presence all distinction of birth and rank and achievement are obliterated." The duke was right as far as he went, but he did not go far enough. At all times and under all circumstances God's people are members of one family, and each has a right to expect under every circumstance the love and the tenderness of every member of the household. They may not love us, and they may not treat us with kindness, but that in no wise lessens our obligation to love them and treat them even as Jesus loves and treats us.

There is a sweet and solemn tenderness associated with the expressed wishes of the dying. We treasure in our hearts their last commissions, and to the measure of our ability we strive to

fulfil them. Often have we heard men and women say, "I must do this because it was the dying wish of my mother or my father, of my wife or my husband, of my child or of my friend." This morning I want to bring to you, as an individual believer, the dying request of your Saviour and your Lord. To make it more binding he puts it in the form of a command, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you." The two heads under which I will arrange my remarks are Love's Measure, and Love's Might.

I. *Love's Measure.* "As I have loved you." This is what makes it a new commandment. The old commandment was that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Most of us, I fear, have not measured up to that. But there is a measure that towers above that as the Matterhorn towers above a molehill, and that is to love others even as Christ has loved us.

In the first place, he loved us graciously. That means that he loves those who are indeed his enemies. That means much more than loving those who differed with him. It means that he loved the people who hated him. He prayed for the men who nailed him to the tree, and for those who filled his cup with wormwood and gall. I am

quite aware that I am laying before you a mighty task—a task that tested the heart of God to perform; a task that is possible only to those who have incarnated the spirit of Jesus Christ. Some may reply to me that they cannot feel the same tender emotion for people who have lied about them and who have sought continually to oppose them that they feel toward those who have always been eager to help and to comfort them. That is quite true. It is not the emotion that goes along with love that Jesus asks, but he does ask us to treat those who seek to do us ill with the same spirit of helpfulness that we have for those who would do us well. I do not think Jesus felt the same toward Judas as he did toward John, but he was as eager to save the one as he was to save the other. A cultured Brahmin, speaking of the spread of the gospel, said, “It is not the perfection of Christian doctrines, but the graciousness of the Christian missionaries, that will win India for Jesus.” Oh, that the spirit of graciousness—the spirit that made Jesus try so hard to win Judas, and that did recover a denying Simon—might take possession of all our hearts, rooting out all bitterness and anger and strife. Jesus did not bring love into the world. It was here long before his advent. But he did direct it into a new

channel, that through the lives of his own people the deserts of human selfishness and sin might rejoice and blossom as the rose.

In the second place, his love was universal. The love of the Old Testament was but as the flickering of a candle in the window of a cottage, while the love of Christ is as the central sun, holding all the planets in their courses, glorifying the dark corners of the earth, and weaving rainbows through the blackest clouds. The idea of a race-wide love must have sounded strange in a land and age where bigotry and selfishness were so common. It was a Roman historian who described the Hebrews as the haters of the human race. Even the most devout Jew thought of Jehovah as a God who was partial to the seed of Abraham, and to whom all other nations were abhorrent. Into their midst came this Galilean peasant who announced that Jehovah loved all men with an infinite and eternal tenderness, and in that tenderness Jew and Gentile shared alike. He was crucified for that teaching nineteen centuries ago, and he is being crucified for it today. Whenever we treat with coldness or contempt those for whom he died we are driving nails through his hands and feet and thrusting the

spear into his side. Of course, we all love some people, but God demands that we love all people.

In the third place, he loved us condescendingly. There was about his attitude neither pride nor selfishness. From the throne of his Father to his bed in the manger, and from the manger on to the cross, he passed without ever bemoaning the price that he had to pay, or the pain that he had to endure. When they lied about him he went on living the truth. He was so eager to bless the people that he had no time to listen to their sneers or to look upon their frowns. This stooping is not so easy as we sometimes think. It is not so hard to lift a man up to the place where we are standing, but it is a service worthy of the Son of God to go down to the outcast and take our place beside him in order to lift him up. When William Carey was beginning his great work, the British government offered to make him the king's representative to the people of India if he would give up his missionary enterprise and devote himself to the political uplift of the natives. It was a tempting offer. In a single day he could have passed from association with those without caste to a position of rank and influence in the empire. But he did not hesitate for a moment. Like his Master, he left the trappings of royalty for the

lowliest place in the world in order to help others into holiness and heaven. Let us not make the mistake, however, of thinking that lowliness and greatness are opposite conditions. To be lowly in the service of others is to be greater than being exalted in the interest of self. Real greatness is never found by those who seek it, but it seeks out and crowns those who forget it in their zeal to bless others.

Once more, let me say that this love we are talking about is extravagant. There is a thing called love that weighs and measures and calculates. It demands a *quid pro quo* for every service it renders; but the love that I am talking about demands nothing but the privilege of giving, and finds her ample compensation in the smile on the face of the one she has blessed. Just as the true physician works, not for the fee that he will receive, but for the health that he may bring to his patient, even so are we to serve for the sake of blessing someone else. I heard a story recently about Dr. Bernardo that I want to pass on. One cold night there came to the door of his orphanage a little fellow who was cold and hungry, but the house was full. The doctor told him that they could not take him in, but that if he would return in a couple of weeks they might find room

for him. With bowed head and a hungry body the little fellow went away. The next morning he was found dead in a doorway. Then it was that Dr. Barnardo placed over the door of his home, "No needy child shall ever be turned away." But even that did not bring back the one that perished. Your chance to offer a kindly hand to some wayward brother may end before tomorrow, and in your heart there would be a great regret because the kindly word which might have been said, or the reconciliation which might have taken place is forever beyond your reach. I know it hurts our pride to humble ourselves, but what right has a follower of Jesus to nourish pride? If Sir Walter Raleigh was willing to lay his beautiful cloak in the dust in order that Elizabeth might cross the street, shall we not be willing to lay down our pride for Jesus to walk on it in finding an entrance into some cold and hardened heart?

II. *Love's Might.* I think we all feel that there is something lacking in the force that is behind or within the church. While professing a fellowship that is nearer and dearer than that of any mere earthly organization, we are more quick to resent things done by the members of the church than those done in any other organization. What

we need is the love of Christ shed abroad in our own hearts by the Holy Spirit.

In the first place, love will change drudgery into delight. Religion without love is one of the dreariest things in the world. We go through the routine of Sabbath services much as Sisyphus rolling the stone up the hill, only to have it roll to the bottom again. But if only we could put love into the service—love for God and love for men—then the drudgery would soon become delightful. I recall the case of a young lady who considered the game of chess as little less than absurd. She called it the drudgery of sport, and declared that anyone who would play chess for pleasure would saw a cord of hardwood for a joke. But she fell in love with a noted chess player, and soon became such an enthusiast over the game that she carried a board and set of men when she traveled on the train, and if she could find no one to play with her, would spend hours working out problems and planning new combinations. If you will but fall in love with Jesus Christ you will find the work of blessing others the most delightful game in the world.

In the second place, this love of Christ will unify the people of God. The modern Inter-church Movement will never amount to much

unless we become melted together in the love of Jesus Christ. Today we are like a lot of icebergs, each following his own course, and ready to bump into anyone who comes our way. Do you know the difference between the iceberg that sent the Titanic to her doom and the ocean that carries on its bosom the traffic of the world? Just the difference of temperature. When you lower your temperature the ocean becomes iceberg; but if you raise the temperature the iceberg becomes ocean. The difference between the men and the women who are attracting people to the church and those who are repelling them is just the difference of temperature. The cold and frozen heart repels, no matter how orthodox it may be, while the warm and glowing spirit attracts all who come within its influence. How easy it is for us to make excuses for the shortcomings of those we love, and how quick we are to discover anything commendable in their conduct. Even when they do the things we cannot endorse, how easy it is to keep silent. It is still true that love covereth a multitude of sins.

Finally, let me remind you that the incarnation of the spirit of love will add to our own enjoyment. Just to feel that we have done something that Jesus approves is in itself a compensation for

a thousand snubs and sneers. To be like him is to taste of the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Years ago France began to build a tower of political emancipation, without the cement of the spirit of love. They inscribed on their banners "Liberty, Equity, Fraternity," but ere it was completed the victims of the guillotine were heaped about its base. Today Jesus of Nazareth is building a tower, and every stone is being cemented in its place with that love that seeketh not her own, and that is ready to bear all things and endure all things for the glory of our common Lord and our needy brethren.

Now, brethren, who will begin at this time to learn the eleventh commandment? There is only one way to learn it, and that is by practicing it. Who will go to that person you dislike, or that you know dislikes you, and offer the hand of a brother or a sister? Who will try to love his enemies as Jesus loved his, and serve his foes as Jesus served his? Those who will try it this morning for Jesus' sake will taste of the wine of God's good pleasure, and know the joy that held Jesus even to the cross.

IX

THE SHOUT OF VICTORY

John 16: 33—Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

There are many birds that sing as sweetly as the nightingale and the lark, but these are supremely prized because they sing in the night. When all other songsters are silenced by the darkness, these are the prophets of the dawn.

“It is easy enough to be pleasant
When life goes by like a song;
But the man worth while is the man that can smile
When everything goes dead wrong.”

Jesus of Nazareth was preeminently a singer in the night. When the darkness grew so dense that others could not see a step before them, he went steadily forward, singing as he went. What to others looked like the darkness of eternal night appeared to him as that darkness that immediately precedes the dawn, and he went singing into Gethsemane.

Throughout the world today there is being waged one of the fiercest and, in some respects the most perilous assaults ever made against the church of Jesus Christ. It is perilous both because of the forces that have combined to make it, and because it is directed against our weakest point. In other ages atheism and agnosticism attacked the head, one denying the existence and the other questioning the claims of the Nazarene. With comparative ease these assaults were repulsed, and the great cause moved steadily forward. Today all is changed. Now a multitude of foes have combined to prove, not that Christ is less than divine, or that his teachings are less than perfect, but it is openly asserted that his doctrines cannot be so woven into human thoughts and deeds as to produce Christ-like men and women. That the church recognizes this as a valid criticism is evident from her almost frantic efforts to strengthen the weak point. Organizations of various kinds are springing up within her ranks with the avowed object of resisting this latest attack. So enthusiastic are the leaders in these movements that we are in danger of substituting ethics for theology, and in our zeal to build forts we are neglecting to provide ammunition. In the midst of the present confusion we need to remember that

all movements are not advances, neither are all changes reforms. During the Great War we were told that the church must revolutionize both her message and her methods. Some churches tried it with disastrous results, while the others which kept close to the old message passed safely through the great ordeal and are still pressing forward.

If ever there was a time when the disciples would have appeared justified in questioning the words of the Master it was surely when he uttered the words of our text, for they certainly had the appearance of idle boasting. With the enemy closing in upon every side, with Judas gone forth to complete his infamous bargain, while the little company of eleven faithful disciples were crushed with the announcement of his approaching departure, it must have sounded absurd for him to exclaim, "I have overcome the world." It certainly looked as though the world had overcome him. But after nineteen hundred years we discover that his and not theirs was the true outlook.

Just now we are hearing a babble of voices declaring that orthodoxy is in its dotage, and that if the church is not to be altogether blotted out she must change both her method and her message. I wish we might close our ears to every other voice this morning and hear him saying out

of the midst of the darkness, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Let me speak to you of three things this morning: First the world with which he had to contend; second, the weapons used by the world; third, the weapons with which he overcame the world.

I. *The World With Which He Contended.*

Let us get clearly in our minds what the world is to which our Lord referred. There is a world which God made, and a world which God loves, and a world for which Christ died, but the world which Jesus overcame differs from these.

In the first place, it is the world that has the devil for its god. Paul tells us that the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not. It is the world that seeks through evil for its good. Every man and woman seeking for pleasure in that which is known to be wrong is a citizen of that world which Jesus overcame. The drunkard seeking pleasure in his cups, the gambler filching from his victim his hard-earned cash, and the men who, for their own advancement, oppress their neighbors, are all members of that organization which Jesus overcame. We shrink from the thought of demon worship as practiced in India, but the practice is equally

common in America. We may not bring offerings of rice and chicken in order to win his favor, but we offer things of infinitely more value when we surrender our highest manhood and womanhood in order to obtain a passing pleasure. Whoever surrenders his better impulses for the sake of a momentary pleasure is making the devil his god—evil his good. Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if he would lower his standard of rightness. Our Lord won his first great victory over the world when he refused to purchase bread and fame and power by surrendering his loyalty to the known will of his father. Satan made a similar offer to the German kaiser a few years ago, and that monarch accepted it to his own everlasting ruin. For a moment there flashed before him a vision of an empire more wonderful than that of Caesar, or Charlemagne or Napoleon, and William grasped for it, only to find that Satan is a liar from the beginning; he abides not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

In the second place, they are of this world that Jesus overcame whose lives are self-centered. One may be neither drunkard, thief, nor liar, and yet he may live an essentially selfish life. He who seeks first his own personal gratification, and who

values everything by the amount of pleasure it will bring to him, is a citizen of the world which Christ overcame. We may be millionaires or we may be toilers; we may occupy the highest or the lowest social seats, but if we are living for ourselves alone we are not overcoming the world. Our so-called social reforms are mere slashes at the branches of sin. Selfishness is the root which we must dig up if we are to be overcomers. How completely our Lord overcame will appear if we study carefully the temptation in the wilderness. As has been frequently pointed out, all temptations may be classified under one of three heads, viz., the lust of the flesh—the desire for physical gratification; the lust of the eye—the desire for popular applause; and the pride of life—the desire for exalted rank. Now read the three temptations and see how they fit into these. The first was the desire for food, the second the desire for applause, and the third the desire for world-wide dominion. To each offer he replied with an emphatic refusal. Having been sent by the Father on a mission to bless the world, he would permit nothing to turn him from his task. On his way to the cross there were twelve legions of angels waiting to free him from his persecutors, but he waved them back, because if he had accepted their

service he could not have saved the world. Some have argued that in refusing the pleasure of the world he was but seeking a higher pleasure for himself. Let us remember that the sin is not in seeking for pleasure, but the means through which we seek it. Is a father selfish because he toils day after day that his children may be fed, clothed and educated? Is a mother selfish because she spends sleepless nights watching by the bed whereon lies her sick babe? If this be selfishness, then I say blessed be selfishness, for it is the most god-like thing about which we know anything.

In the third place, it is the world that puts the present before the future. There is a world of which it has been said, "The fashion of this world passeth away." To have no aspirations and no expectations that look beyond the grave is to be worldly indeed. A worldly life may wish and, indeed, may hope, that there is a land of blessedness beyond the one in which we now are living, but if we are not convinced that it is true, and are not seeking by sacrifice and service to fit ourselves for that life, we are essentially worldly. With Jesus the dominating consideration was always the hereafter life. When questioned about his kingship he replied, "My kingdom is not of this world." Looking at the cross he exclaimed,

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Only a vision of that Christ and that Cross will ever make you and me strong enough to overcome the world that crucified Jesus. I read recently of a young man who had been a drunkard and who, through the influence of his young wife, decided to free himself from the accursed appetite. On his way to and from his work he had to pass by a saloon where for years he had spent most of his evenings and his earnings. His wise little wife had a picture made of his cozy home, with the table spread and herself waiting for his coming. He carried it in his pocket, and every evening before leaving the office he took it out and looked at it. He declared that the vision of that home made it easy for him to pass by that place of temptation. Jesus had ever before him the vision of that home from which he came, and the day when he should return with his redeemed host, and that vision held him true to his task until the work was finished.

II. *The Weapons of the World.* Let us get a little nearer to the text and note what are the weapons used by the great adversary, because they are the same with which we must contend.

In the first place, Jesus was assaulted by the smiles of the world. There is no weapon in Satan's armory more terrible than this. Thousands who would not yield to the torch and the fagot have fallen under the spell of the world's caress. Philistine warriors could do nothing against Samson, but the smiles of Delilah humbled the giant. I believe the hardest temptation that came to Jesus was not when the enemy offered him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, but when the people thronged about him, kissing the hem of his garment and in their passionate devotion begging him to take the throne and drive out the Roman invader. He knew the devotion with which they would have followed if only he would lead the way. Only God knows the struggle in his own heart when he turned from the palm-strewn path and closed his ears to their hosannas and set his face toward Gethsemane and Calvary. Dr. Samuel Johnson used to say, "Of all wild beasts, save me from the slanderer; and of all tame beasts, save me from the flatterer." A smile that would lead you away from the path of duty may have the face of an angel, but it has the heart of a devil.

In the second place, he overcame the frowns of the world. Having failed to seduce him with

flatteries, the world turned against him a face that was black with hate. The very companions of his childhood, the boys with whom he played in Nazareth, rushed him to the brow of the hill and would have hurled him to his death. His own brethren turned against him and declared that he was insane. Wherever he went, in the Temple, the synagogue, or the market place, he was sure to meet the faces that scowled upon him. Every slander that the human mind could invent was hurled against him, and the very miracles he performed were attributed to satanic power. Beginning in ridicule and laughter, the opposition deepened until with scourging and mocking and crowning with thorns they hurried him to the Cross. But never for a moment did he waver. He trampled under feet both the smiles and the frowns of the world when they came between him and his consciousness of what was the Father's will. The prince of this world knows how to use both smiles and frowns in his warfare, and we must be prepared to resist them both if we are to be able to say with our Master, "I have overcome the world."

In the third place, he overcame the methods of the world. When Satan could neither seduce nor frighten him from the path of duty, he sought

to become his counselor. If he would win the admiration of the multitude he had but to go to the pinnacle of the Temple and leap into the valley below, and thus prove his divine mission by the evidence of supernatural protection. Since he was come to establish his kingdom on earth he need not wait through long centuries for his coronation. Satan was ready then and there to hand him over the crown and scepter, provided Jesus would recognize his godship and offer him worship. If the Greeks were most to be feared when they came offering gifts, so Satan is most to be feared when he presents himself as a teacher of the church of God. I have seen all sorts of gambling devices resorted to in order to raise money for missions and church buildings. A splendid work may be ruined by a bad instrument.

During the Great War some people became impatient and wanted peace without victory. That was Satan's way—ending one war by laying the foundation for another. We need to beware of "get rich quick" methods. People are continually saying that since God is almighty he ought to do thus and so. I sometimes think that we need a new definition of almightiness. There are some things that Satan can do that God cannot. Satan

can lie, but it is impossible for God to lie. Satan may do good in order to accomplish an evil end, but God cannot do evil that good may come. If we are to be overcomers indeed, then we must be careful not only to see the end that God has pointed out, but we must follow the God-ordained path to reach that point. There is a very simple way of extinguishing a fire on shipboard. Just open the stop cocks and let in the sea. There will soon be no fire, but your ship with her precious cargo will be a worthless hulk on the bottom of the ocean. God's method is to extinguish the fire and yet salvage the ship and her cargo. Jesus not only overcame Satan's smiles and his frowns, but he overcame his methods, and went on his way of the cross, through the resurrection, and up to glory. There are two questions that we should all ask. The first is, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the second is, Lord, how wilt thou have me to do it?

III. *The Weapons that Overcame the World.* I have but time to suggest the weapons used by Christ in that great conflict. They seem simple, but they were efficient, and they must be your weapons and mine.

The first was an unconquerable faith in God. To him the work was Jehovah's and he was sure

of its ultimate triumph. Never for one moment did he entertain a thought of failure. Sometimes the forces seemed overwhelming, and his trusted disciples grew faithless, but he pressed onward. Even on the cross he was so certain of the triumph of his cause that he distributed the trophies of victory while death was hastening him to the tomb. When I hear men talking of "peace at any price" I wonder what would have happened had they been in command at Valley Forge or Brandywine Creek. If they had been in Washington's place the Declaration of Independence would have gone to the graveyard of still-born political aspirations, and America would have remained but a colonial dependence of the British Empire. As the foaming mountain torrent empties itself into the great river that moves on majestically toward the sea, so must we cast our thinking and serving into the great river that flows from the Cross of Calvary.

The second weapon used by Jesus was a persistent service along the line of God's revealed will. While certain that the cause would triumph, he wrought as zealously as if everything depended on his own unaided effort. In the midst of his battle, when the rock in Joseph's garden lay across

his path, he dared to believe that the Father would make a way for him through the tomb, and he did.

Finally, he overcame through sacrificial love. He conquered the world by giving himself for it. Today his cause is still moving onward, and by and by, when we all fall into the path along which he went, there will be a whole church repeating his great triumphant shout, "Be of good cheer. I, too, have overcome the world."

X

THE ACID TEST

Romans 8: 9—If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

When a jeweler would assure himself that an article is real gold, he has an acid with which he tests it. The touch of the acid will show whether it is a baser metal or pure gold. The touch of the acid causes the gold to reveal its character, and the baser metal is discovered. From the very beginning of the church's history there have been men and women like Ananias and Sapphira, who have claimed to belong to the people of God, and who for a time have succeeded in deceiving themselves, and perhaps others also. I suspect that even Simon Magus and Judas Iscariot deemed themselves genuine disciples, but under the acid test of absolute loyalty to Jesus, the base metal was revealed. One may polish brass until it looks like gold, and for a time it may pass current as a genuine coin, but submit it to the acid test and the deception will appear. Our text

for this morning is the acid test by which every soul is to be tried.

Both science and scripture tell us of a time in the dateless past when the earth was void and without form, and darkness covered the great deep. Then there came a day when the shafts of light pierced the shield of darkness. The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and the angels of God shouted for joy over a new-born world. Before everything else—before the light that pierced the gloom, and before the life that sprang forth in myriad forms; before the blooming of flowers and the singing of birds, and the happy laughter of children—there was the moving of the Spirit of God. What we are pleased to call the life that is in the seed is but the Spirit of the Creator moving to beautify and fructify the world.

What was true in the physical is equally true in the spiritual domain. There was a time when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people; when humanity bowed down and worshiped things baser than itself; when beasts and creeping things, and even reptiles, were offered the homage that rightfully belongs to Jehovah alone. Then through the darkness gleamed, first the star of Bethlehem, and after-

wards the Sun of Righteousness, and again the angels of God shouted for joy over a new creation. The advent of Jesus was the beginning of a new creation. It was the dawning of an age that is to be eternal, and the creation of a race that is to live as long as God lives. Adam's race was to end at the grave, but the new creation is to pass through death itself and inherit eternity.

There are two dangers that confront every human soul, and we need to guard against them both. One is in thinking we can inherit the new life without incarnating the Christ Spirit, and the other is in thinking that we can possess the Christ Spirit without reproducing the Christ life. One might as well try to produce summer fruits without the sun as to attempt to reproduce Christian ethics without the incarnation of the Spirit of Jesus. It is the sun in the earth, and not the sun in the sky, that makes the earth produce flowers and fruit. You may bury a shipload of seed in the heart of an iceberg, and the sun may shine upon that iceberg for centuries, but not a seed will germinate, because the heart of the iceberg has closed its doors against the incoming of the rays of the sun. There are in each human heart the seeds of every possible virtue, but they will never germinate unless touched by the warmth

and tenderness of the Spirit of Jesus. Christianity is not an unctious piety but an active benevolence. It is short on ecclesiastical vesture and postures, but it is long on human sympathy and devotion to God.

The text I have chosen for this morning is addressed to the professed Christians in Rome. Many of them had come out of Judaism, and they were saturated with the ritualism of the Hebrew people. They could not get away from the idea of salvation through ritualistic performances, and the observance of certain rites and ceremonies. Against this idea Paul directed the batteries of his logic. He is not denouncing the ritual in itself, but he is contending that it is of value only as it is prompted by the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in the heart. He tells us that if we have incarnated the Spirit of Jesus we have everything, and that without it all else is but dross. Let me try to point out very briefly to you what the Spirit of Christ is, and then we can judge whether or not he has a place in our lives.

I. In the first place, the Spirit of Christ is *The Spirit of Fatherhood*. He had very little to say about God. With him the great term was Father. The Fatherhood of God is one of the shibboleths of modern theology, but in too many

cases I fear it is only a shibboleth—a term used without any adequate conception of its meaning. It is a name on the lips without being a spirit incarnated in the life. We turn with contempt from the wandering vagabond who bears the name of an honored sire, but who fails to honor him in the life. There is a story told of an English nobleman who had a wayward son. After repeated efforts to recover him from his vagabondage, the father said, “Either change your conduct or change your name.” Whenever Jesus speaks of his Father, it is not to lessen, but to emphasize his obligation to honor that parent. When Mary questioned him sharply about his remaining behind in the Temple, he promptly answered, “I must be about my Father’s business.”

There were three things which Jesus never questioned, and these were, his Father’s wisdom, his Father’s goodness, and his Father’s ability. When the way became so dark that he could not see a step before him, he exclaimed, “Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” When it looked as though both earth and heaven had rejected him, he exclaimed, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” When it appeared, even to his followers, as though his cause were dead, he cried to his enemies, “This is your hour and the power

of darkness; nevertheless hereafter ye shall see the Son of man coming in power and great glory." This is the Spirit of Christ—the spirit that will not admit the possibility of any failure on the part of God, or on the part of those who are following him. This means the acceptance of the divine Fatherhood, not as a means of escaping the consequences of our sin, but as an explanation of our conduct. Some years ago I went through one of the largest factories in Canada, and had pointed out to me a young man in overalls, begrimed with grease and soot. Later I was introduced to that youth, and remarked that as the son of his father he ought to have a more exalted position in the establishment. He replied, "Because I am the son of my father I want to learn every part of this business, for some day I am going to manage it all."

II. The second great mark of the Spirit of Jesus is *The Spirit of Sonship*. It is quite common today to meet men and women who are loud in their preaching of the Fatherhood of God, while utterly failing to recognize their obligation as sons. Because God is their Father they expect him to provide for all their needs, and protect them from all their perils, and pardon all their transgressions, while at the same time they per-

sistently ignore their obligations to serve him as his sons. One of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus was his persistent observation of every obligation the Father laid upon him. And I want you to think of how heavy these obligations were. The Father asked him to leave heaven and its glories, and come as a babe to Bethlehem; to go into the desert for a forty days' fast and his fight with the tempter; to endure for more than thirty years the hatred and persecution of the people he came to bless; to drink the cup in Gethsemane and endure the agonies of the Cross; to be spit upon by those he sought to bless, and have his dying agony ridiculed with ribald jests. When his friends would turn him from that thorn-strewn path, he replied, "I must do the will of him that sent me." To him there was only one law, and that was the will of his Father. According to Satan's lie, God was both untrue and unkind, and Jesus came to refute that falsehood. If the Spirit of Christ is dwelling in your heart and mine, he will lead us to be true, at any cost, to the One who sent us. You will recall that just before leaving the world to go back to the Father, Jesus said to his followers, "As my Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you." God could always count on Jesus. Can he equally

count on you and me? I do not mean to say that we shall have to do as hard things as Jesus did, or that we shall do the things as well as he did; but unless I have in my heart the desire to be always well pleasing to God, and unless to the measure of my ability I am striving toward that end, then I may well ask myself the question, "Have I the Spirit of Christ?"

The third characteristic of the Spirit of Jesus is *The Spirit of Brotherhood*. This naturally grows out of the other two. If Jehovah is my Father, and I am his son, then I am a brother to every child of his everywhere. My obligation to humanity grows, not out of my relationship to Adam, but out of my relationship to Jehovah. Men have always professed to believe that God has made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth, but that has not lessened their indifference to the wretchedness that is round about them. They have not hesitated to treat men as beasts of burden, and buy and sell them as chattels on the market. It was Jesus of Nazareth who brought into our world, not as a theory, but as an obligation, the brotherhood of humanity. To him it made no difference whether the skin was white or black or yellow; whether the man was rich or poor, old or young. As the Son of

man, he was brother to every man on earth, and sought to perform for him a brother's part. The child of Adam loves his own kindred and his own friends, but only the child of God can or will love his enemies. Most of us feel that if the prodigal is fool enough to squander his possessions in riotous living, it is good enough for him to feed swine, and be hungrier than the beasts that he is feeding. If the foolish sheep will wander off into the desert and leave the flock and the shepherd, it deserves to be torn by the wolves. Why should I go after the hungry prodigal and try to bring him home, or lose my rest wandering in the desert in quest of a lost lamb? Brethren, the only thing that will ever keep us from feeling that way is the Spirit of Christ. I heard read the other day a letter from one of our missionaries. She told of the toil from dawn till dark; of the hard work and the lonely hours and the intense homesickness. Do you ask why is she there? It is because she has the Spirit of Christ, and that wonderful love of his constrains her to endure all things for the sake of those who are her brethren and sisters. Jesus in describing the last judgment tells us that some will be commended because they fed the hungry, others because they clothed the naked; yet others because they visited the sick; and some be-

cause they visited those who were in jail, and he calls all these wretched and needy ones his brethren. Dr. McArthur tells a story of a man who was driving through the country in a buggy, and he happened upon a spot where a number of men were working in a sand pit. They seemed very much excited, and he asked the cause. He was told that there had been a cave-in and a man was buried under the sand. He remained in the buggy watching the men work. He leisurely filled his pipe and began to smoke. Between the puffs he asked if they knew the man who was buried. When he was told the name, he immediately leaped from the buggy and ran for a spade to join in the work, saying as he ran, "That's my own brother, Jim." Brethren, the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of brotherhood, and when it dwells in your heart and mine no work will be too hard to undertake in order to accomplish their deliverance.

IV. In the fourth place, the Spirit of Christ is *The Spirit of Earnestness*. One cannot read the story of the Gospels without being impressed with the earnestness of Jesus as he went about his Father's business. We read that when the persecution was fiercest, and his own disciples warned him against going into Judea, where the Jews

sought to kill him, he steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem. Neither the desire for rest nor fear of his enemies could hold him back. He came into this world to destroy the work of the devil. He knew that it was a gigantic task, but he refused to believe it impossible. He believed that sin was an alien in God's world, and he determined to cast it out. He knew that Satan was a usurper and he was resolved to overthrow him. This is a long war. It began six thousand years ago, and is still waged with unabated fury. Yet if we possess the Spirit of Jesus we will not only be sure of ultimate victory, but we will bend every energy of heart and hand to accomplish it.

Jesus not only recognized the presence of sin, but he also recognized the root from which it all grew. He knew that unbelief in the human heart was the only barrier between a soul and salvation, so he directed his energy to destroy the root of unbelief, well knowing that when men learned the truth about God they would soon love him and, loving him, they would gladly serve him. I remember hearing a wonderful address some years ago, by the man who grappled with the problem of cleaning up Panama, and making it a safe place for white men to live. When our government began the task of completing the canal they

found it almost impossible to get white men to go there, and those who did go soon sickened and died. We built hospitals, but the deadly fever went on claiming its victims. Then this man discovered that the cause of the trouble was the mosquito that spread the deadly contagion, and he took along with him, not a lot of doctors and nurses, but a band of men who knew how to destroy mosquitoes, and in a few years the mosquitoes disappeared, and with them the fever, and from being the white man's grave, Panama has become a health resort, and the mecca of tourists. Jesus realized that the fever of sin was caused by the mosquito of unbelief, so he set himself to destroy that. He opened a few blind eyes and restored a few lepers, but the one great call of his mission was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The church and the individuals who are doing the most for the world today are those who are laying the emphasis on the need of faith in God.

V. The Spirit of Christ is *The Spirit of Optimism*. Never for one moment during those strenuous years of his life did he doubt his ultimate triumph. There were times when the multitude forsook him, and when the enemy pressed him on every hand, but through all the darkness he

saw the gleam, and he followed it with unfaltering confidence. Indeed, there were times when his own followers became despondent, and we hear him ask, "Will ye go away also?" But whether alone on the way to the Cross, or in the midst of the throng at the triumphal entry, he was equally confident that final victory was sure. That is the spirit we need today. You cannot destroy truth, for truth is of God and must live forever.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

Just now some very brilliant men are turning their backs on the old faith, and the enemy is marshaling new forces against the Word of God, both written and incarnate; but the issue is not doubtful. When at last the smoke lifts from the great battlefield, it will be falsehood and not truth that will be dead. If there is anything untrue in your creed and mine it ought to die, as a spy in the army ought to be taken out and shot, but not one thing that is true will ever perish.

"For truth is truth since God is God,
And truth the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

I am an optimist because I am a Christian. I do not look at our army or our equipment for the assurance of victory, but at the Captain of our salvation. Because he won we shall win also, for the same God who girded him and made his way perfect is the God who girds us, and has promised to make us more than conquerors.

VI. Finally, the Spirit of Christ is *The Spirit of Consecration*. While I have been speaking, most if not all of you have been saying in your hearts, "That is true. I believe in the Fatherhood of God and in the brotherhood of humanity; I believe in the perfections of Christ and in the ultimate triumph of his cause." But, tell me, have you that Spirit of Christ that will lead you to consecrate all your powers to speedily bring about a realization of God's will? Is your belief in the Fatherhood of God a thing that will make you ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Is your belief in the brotherhood of man a spirit that will lead you to forego the highest joys and partake of the bitterest sorrows in order that those brethren may be saved? Is your confidence in the triumph of truth that which will lead you to put on the whole armor of God and go forth to fight for his cause? If so, then, my brother, my sister, you have the Spirit of Christ and, having that

Spirit, you are his for time, and his for eternity; and his triumph will be your triumph, and his glory will be your glory.

XI

SPIRITUAL ATHLETICS

1 Corinthians 9: 24—So run, that ye may attain.

Athletic sports have played an important part in the mental, moral, physical, and spiritual development of the human race. In some form we find traces of these sports—these trials of skill and strength—in the earliest pages of human history, but it remained for Greece, Britain and America to bring them to their highest development. It is worthy of note in passing that the two great Anglo-Saxon nations, Britain and America, that dominate the world in athletics, also dominate it in commercial and intellectual development, and in religious leadership. Of course, there are abuses in connection with modern sports, and there are abuses in connection with modern business and modern worship, but that would not justify us in closing down all our factories and stores and offices, and closing up all our churches and Bible schools. We ought to seek to eliminate the abuses,

such as gambling and dishonest playing, but the sports themselves ought to be retained.

Paul continually drew illustrations from the Grecian games of his day, and was evidently familiar with them. As he watched the runner bending all his energy to be first at the goal; divesting himself of every superfluous garment and looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, he coveted that zeal and consecration on the part of those who entered the contest for the crown of glory that fadeth not away. One of the great musicians of our day who was a few years ago a golf enthusiast, abandoned the sport because he found that in grasping the club handles his fingers were losing their sensitiveness when he touched the keys. As a matter of fact, you rarely find an athlete who becomes a champion in more than one line of athletics. A great pitcher is rarely ever a great batter. A great golfer is seldom found to be a great tennis player. The man who will enroll his name among the great athletes of America and the world will have to aspire to something higher than just an ordinary player, and the man who will attain to the supreme place among the sons of God will have to be able, like Paul, to say, "This one thing I do."

Tonight I want to address myself to all here assembled, but particularly to the young men and women, and urge upon you that you enter for the supreme contest of all the ages. For the Grecian runner there was only a fading wreath that soon would fall to pieces and the enrollment of his name among those who had won in the games. I am asking you to enter the contest for a crown of eternal glory, and a place among the exalted sons and daughters of God. Let me speak to you tonight of The Runner, The Race, and The Reward.

I. *The Runner.* There were three things that were vital if the youth was to win in the great Olympic contest.

The first was that he had to enroll. Before he could enter the contest he must go to the master and enter his name as one who would compete in some one of the great struggles. He had to pay no fee, but he must enroll. I suspect that some one will say, "Did he not have to be a citizen of Greece before he could compete?" Yes, and the same is true in the kingdom of God. But I want you to remember that your enrolling makes you a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Your acceptance of Jesus as your personal Saviour is your enrollment, and by that one act every privilege

and obligation of a child of God become yours. Any man or woman, any boy or girl who at this moment says in the silence of his or her own soul, so low that only God can hear it, "I give my name as one who wants to compete for a crown," has already enrolled, and has his or her name in the Lamb's book of life. This is what I want to stress at the very beginning of my sermon. What takes place in your heart I do not know, but God does, and your silent surrender he receives as the token of your citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.

In the second place, he must run in the course assigned to him. The runner is not permitted to select his own course. He is to run with patience the race set before him. One man says, "I want to go to the university and fit myself for the ministry, or for going as a missionary to some distant land"; but there are home duties that make the university an impossibility for the present. There may be a young woman who wants to train for the foreign field, or for hospital service, or for some similar public service, but a widowed mother and fatherless brothers and sisters make her going impossible. The danger is that because God will not permit you to select your own course, you may refuse to run. The Christian race is a race for

soul expansion, and in the solitude of some obscure home, or in the deeper solitude of the sick room may be the place which God has selected as the course you are to run. Frances Ridley Havergal wanted to be a missionary, but God shut her up in a sick room, and there in her communion and fellowship with the Master, and in the quiet using of her pen, she outran all the women of her day. I have the impression that the man who is out-running us all in this city is our Brother Dunaway, who, with a passion for preaching, is shut up year after year in the narrow confines of a hospital. There is a text that I am going to preach from some day, and it reads, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." That is God's way of saying that the thing that he wants us to do is within arm's reach of each one of us. Of course, God may lead us into some larger field by and by, but for the present we are to run where we are. It was in faithfully cobbling shoes and studying maps of the heathen world that Carey was trained for the wider course in India. You will recall that when Paul came to the end he exclaimed, "I have finished the course." It was, I suspect, the longest and hardest course a Christian ever ran, and he won the crown that was at the end of the course.

In the third place, the runner must conform to the rules laid down for the contest. We are told that no man is crowned except he strive lawfully—that is, according to the rules of the game. I have not time to mention all the rules laid down in this old book for the guidance of contestants, but there are two or three of such outstanding importance that I must mention them. One is that we must see to it that we do not hinder others. To foul an opponent is to lose the match. If I try to throw obstacles in the way of another who is trying to do God's will I may not lessen his chance of winning, but I lose my own. If you are familiar with football you know that when one side is guilty of an off-side play or an interference, the team is penalized and loses so many yards of hard-won ground. God charges up to you and me all that we have done to hinder the running of another. On the other hand God gives us credit for all that another has been enabled to win through our assistance. We must not falter in our running because some one else has scattered obstacles in our path. God will take into account these difficulties when he comes to award the prizes. The God who credited David with the temple which he purposed to erect, although he

was hindered in building, will recompense you and me according to the greatness of our endeavor.

II. *The Race.* Now we come to the great contest, and there are three things that we must do if we are to attain to the prize.

First, we must lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us. To me it has always been an interesting spectacle to watch an athlete preparing for the contest. Every superfluous garment is laid aside, not because it is wrong, but because it is a hindrance. These same garments will be taken up and worn again when the race is won. There are many things that are not wrong at all, but they may hinder us in the running. A great many foolish things have been said about theatres and cards and dances, and other forms of secular amusement. What is legitimate and what is illegitimate? They may all be perfectly legitimate, as an ulster is a perfectly legitimate thing for an athlete to wear if he can run as fast with it as he can without it. Take a concrete example. If you can play bridge or dance till eleven o'clock, or spend the evening in a theatre, and then be just as fresh and zealous teaching your class on Sunday morning as you would be if you had spent the evening with your Bible and the lesson, and in prayer for the salva-

tion of the boys and girls under your care, then I have no criticism to offer. But, if the Saturday evening spent in secular enjoyment cools your zeal and lessens your power on Sunday morning, then you ought to lay it aside. Then, too, we are to separate ourselves from the sin that so easily besets us. The literal meaning of that statement is the sin that fits us so snugly. Most of us have some one sin that does not look black and does minister to our pleasure. If we are to win in the race we must cast it aside.

The second thing to do is run. Too many people go at the Christian race much as they go for an afternoon stroll. They want to walk quietly, and sit down and rest frequently. They can stop by the way for a chat with a friend, and turn this way and that for the sake of pleasant company. All through the New Testament the Christian life is set forth as a strenuous matter. It is a race; it is a warfare; it is a wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and with spiritual wickedness in high places. The thing we strive for is something worth while. In running the race our Lord sweat drops of blood, and his feet and hands were torn, and his side pierced; but when at last he crossed the line and shouted, "It is finished!" the gates of heaven were

opened to receive him, and he was welcomed home the victor. A similar welcome awaits you and me if we so run that we obtain.

The third thing in the contest is to stay to the end. The enrolling is not so hard, nor is it very difficult to start in the race, but the crowns are for the overcomers. Every great race is won or lost in the last few yards. Some years ago the man who won the great Marathon race was behind all the way till within a hundred yards of the finish, and then he dashed to the front and crossed the line the victor. It was just before his execution that Paul exclaimed, "I have finished the course," and Jesus was on the cross when he cried, "It is finished." He himself has said, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." There are in this church men and women who are not making any great sensation, but they are pushing steadily forward, and the time is coming when even those who think them slow today will concede their right to the crown at life's close.

III. *The Reward.* "So run that ye may obtain." But what is to be obtained? Is the prize worth the endeavor? The papers have been telling us of the prizes won by Tunney and Dempsey in the last great prize fight, and I have heard several people say, "Who would not take a hard

drubbing for a million dollars or even for Dempsey's share of about five hundred thousand?" But even these are small compared with the prize held before you and me.

In the first place, it includes eternal life. Life is a wonderful thing, and even a life of three score and ten years is worth making a great fight to secure, but when you add eternal to life, then you have the greatest thing in the universe of God. I am not now going to discuss the opposite of eternal life—eternal death—beyond saying that whatever it involves, if it required a million years of struggle to escape it, the million years would be well invested in such an endeavor. But we have the title to it at the very moment we enter the contest. Even if we fail to win the runner's prize, we are sure to win the crown of life, for that is given to all who enter the competition. Just as Dempsey knew that even if he was vanquished in the ring there was a rich reward for entering the contest, so for all who enroll there is life eternal, even if the richer prize be missed.

In the second place, let me remind you that the prize is won or lost in this life. This is the place of competition; over there is the place of compensation. I do not know all that the future life has in store for you and me, but I do know that it

will be determined by what we are and what we do down here. Jesus Christ as the great Head of the school sets the tasks, but we are to determine whether we will graduate with honors or fail in the examination. Most of us are rather expert in censuring others for the neglect of their duties, but their failure will not help us, neither will their successes hinder our winning the prize. If we would be as faithful to our opportunities and our obligations as we want others to be to theirs, what wonders we might accomplish. Just as in the athletic contest we must either win alone or not win at all, so the Christian life is an individual effort to be well pleasing in the sight of God.

In the third place, let me remind you that the prize is worth the winning. On one occasion Jesus exclaimed, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" I would like to turn the Master's question about and ask, "What shall it profit a man if he lose the whole world and save his own soul?" The athlete does not regret the long weeks of training when he stands victor at the close of the contest. The student does not bemoan his long hours over his lessons when he graduates at the head of his class. The warrior does not bemoan his hard marches and his hours under the enemy's fire, and the

wounds that he bears, when he sees his banner floating victoriously over the hard-won field.

Tonight I am calling for contestants in the supreme struggle of all the ages. In the future, God is going to have a race of men and women who will stand victorious over Satan and all his hosts; who will always know the right and who will always do it. A race of men and women who will be waited on by angels, and who will be second only to the Father himself in the glory of their achievements. The list is open to all who will enter, and it is possible for you and for me to win the highest place in all the mighty throng. Who will come forward and say, "Enroll me for the race?"

XII

THE MIGHTY CONQUEROR

1 Corinthians 13: 8—Love never faileth!

They tell us that there is an exception to every rule, but here is one rule that repudiates all exceptions. It is the boast of love that she will accomplish everything that she ever attempts. We hear much today about the power of hydraulics, and of steam, and of electricity, but sooner or later each one of them is confronted with an impossible task. But love never faileth. There are no burdens too heavy for her to bear, and no problems too intricate for her to solve. Astronomers tell us that Alcyone, the central star in the Pleiades, is the sun around which the whole visible universe is revolving. It is the magnet that holds creation together. Some have even suggested that the throne of God is there, and that it is the better land to which those we love have gone, and toward which we all are journeying. Into that boundless field of speculation I have no wish to enter, but

this I know, that what Alcyone is to the material, love is to the spiritual universe. It is the sun that lights all other suns, and it is the cord that binds humanity fast to the throne of God. Love is the priest, the prophet, and the poet of the race. Love lifts life to the uplands, and makes existence something more than a mere struggle for bread. With dextrous fingers she knits up the raveled sleeve of care; she paints pictures on prison walls, and gives us songs in the night. She transforms a cottage into a palace, and makes a feast of the plainest fare.

The text before us this morning is taken from Paul's great eulogy of love. There had arisen a great controversy in the church at Corinth, where each one wanted the preeminence, and all based their claims on their varied gifts. Some were great preachers and thought that they should be the acknowledged leaders; others had the gift of tongues, and thought that they should have the highest place; others had the power to work miracles, and they deemed that the greatest of all gifts; still others had large wealth, and because they could do so much to feed the poor and spread the truth, they claimed the highest place. Paul is reminding them, not that their possessions are worthless, but that their real value is in the fact

that they are dominated by the spirit of love. It is love in the heart that makes the preacher eloquent, and the healer's touch effective, and the gift of money a mighty power. Of course, Paul is dealing with things in the spiritual domain. He would not say that money without love was useless in the commercial world, or that eloquence without love was useless in the political arena, but he does assert that in the building up of a Christian character, and the development of the kingdom of God in the world, love must dominate all other gifts. He does not say which of the other gifts is the greatest, but that they are each equally victorious when the heart is filled with love. 'Love can use eloquence, or she can accomplish her work without it; she can use wealth, or she can succeed without it. We cannot all be rich, or learned, or eloquent, but we can all be filled with the love of God, and when we possess that we are absolutely irresistible in whatever sphere we work.

There are three things that I want to emphasize this morning. The first: A Love-Filled Life. Second: Love's Chosen Task. Third: Love's Single Instrument.

I. *A Love-Filled Life.* What are the marks by which I may know that my life is love-filled?

In the first place, a love-filled life is one that rests continually and contentedly in the consciousness of God's love for me. In theory we all believe in the infinite, eternal and unchangeable love of the Father. We would not for a moment question the fact; but how many of us have translated it into a personal experience? Of course, the great truths of revelation are to be received by faith, but it must be a faith that works by love and purifies the heart. Of course, we all believe that Patti was the greatest vocalist of her day, because we have heard the fact declared by hundreds of reputable witnesses who had listened to that queen of song. But it is quite another thing to have heard her for ourselves, and been thrilled with her music. If we had never heard her, then our opinions would have been as varied as the testimonies of her varied critics; but having once heard her, all the critics in the world could not have changed our convictions. When we open the heart to the incoming of the Holy Spirit, and let him play on our emotions and tell the story of redeeming love, then we know the love of God that passeth knowledge. Go to that little child in his mother's arms this morning and tell him that his mother does not love him, and you will not disturb his confidence, however plausibly you may reason. He

will but press his face a little closer to the bosom of his mother and twine his arms more tightly about her neck. He may not be able to answer your arguments, but he knows you are not telling the truth.

In the second place, a love-filled life is one that is full of love for God. God's love in us has become a great creative force, and we can say with John, "We love him because he has first loved us." I sometimes think that too much of our preaching is emphasizing the desire of God that we should serve him, whereas God's supreme desire is that we should love him. I recall hearing a song at a concert many years ago. There was just one verse in that song that I have never forgotten. It ran thus:

"Love, it is a painful thrill,
But not to love's more painful still;
But oh, it is the worst of pain
To love and not be loved again."

The advent of Jesus Christ into our world was something more than to make a sacrifice for sin; it was to convince us that God loves us, and desires our love in return. We are not born of God until we are born to love. The modern Pantheistic conception of God as a mere imminent force would place him beyond our power of loving him.

One cannot love an abstraction, any more than he could love the law of gravitation. The martyrs went singing to the stake, not because they believed in an imminent force, but because they loved a loving Father. There will be no lack of service for a perishing world when the whole church of God falls in love with him. Trying to create a passion for a perishing world in hearts that do not love God is like trying to kindle an iceberg into flames.

In the third place, a love-filled life is one that loves all that God loves. If ever we are to win men to God, we shall have to begin by loving them. When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, then we come to love all that he loves. We have a popular saying which runs, "Love me, love my dog." That does not mean that we actually love the dog, but we love his owner so well that we treat his dog with lovingkindness for his master's sake. We toil and we give to send the gospel to Africa, and to Asia, not because we have a personal love for the black-skinned Ethiopian or the yellow-skinned Mongolian, but because God loves them and desires them to be his own. Over every lost soul the heart of God is yearning, and for his sake we seek to save them. Here, then, is the threefold

mark of a love-filled life. It rests in the assurance of God's personal love for us; it responds with a joyous love for God; and it reaches out in tenderness toward a perishing world, because God loves these people.

II. *Love's Chosen Mission.* For one to boast that he has never failed will mean much or little according to the things that he has attempted. We have all known men and women who could probably say truthfully that they have never failed in anything that they undertook; but on investigation it would appear that they never had undertaken anything worth while. When love boasts that she never fails it is worth while to inquire as to what she is attempting. There are three things which love includes in her task.

In the first place, she has set herself to the task of reconciling man to God. Without attempting at this time to discuss the doctrine of the fall, or explain the steps by which men have been led to believe Satan's lies, it must be evident to every intelligent being that there is enmity in the hearts of men against the administration of Jehovah. It is not only true that men and women are in spiritual darkness, but it is also true that they love it, and as naturally turn to sin as the duck turns to the water or the sow to the mire. Even those who

have come to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord will concede that sin still has a terrible fascination for them, and that they have a continual battle with themselves to keep the body under. Even when we would do good, evil is present with us. But love has set herself to the task of making us love holiness even as God loves it, and hate sin even as God hates it. I do not know how long it will take, or how many and varied our experiences will be before that goal is reached; but love never faileth; and having begun the good work in us she will carry it on unto the day of Jesus Christ. Not law but love must be the purifying power. Some of us can remember when the burden of practically all evangelistic preaching was based on the terrors of hell, and Jonathan Edwards' celebrated sermon on "A Sinner in the Hands of an Angry God," was accepted as the orthodox standard. I am not questioning the truth of that sermon, but I am convinced that the threatenings of the law will not produce love. The gallows may scare men from committing murder, but it will not cause them to hate cruelty. But when love enters the life she begins to cast out the evil, and will continue the process until we love God because he first loved us. It was not the harshness of the elder brother, but the com-

passion of the loving father that brought the prodigal home and kept him there. Convince the patient that love guides the surgeon's hand and he will yield himself to the knife, and convince the soul that the love of God permits or sends every sorrow that comes our way, and then we shall smile through our tears as we look into his face.

In the second place, love has set herself to the task of taking sin out of your heart and mine. Those of us who have been longest in the service of Jesus will confess this morning that there are still things in our hearts that ought not to be there, and we often cry out, as did Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" To be perfectly free from actual transgression, and from any desire to transgress is our dream of heaven itself. There are times when we do not seem to be making any progress at all—times when we seem to be getting worse rather than better, but that is only an illusion. Sin is like the measles—most offensive looking but least perilous when it is brought to the surface. We pray for deliverance from sin and then we are shocked by the experiences that accompany its elimination. I recall an experience of years ago in a hospital in Canada. A mother had brought her little boy for treatment. He pled

with her not to leave him there, but she insisted on his remaining in the institution. He had some spinal trouble and his treatment would call for many weeks of suffering. But, because she loved him so, the wise mother insisted that he remain. When, in later years, he stood an athlete, he blessed God for that mother love that held him in the furnace of pain till his recovery was complete. I do not know what pain you and I may pass through before the last remnant of sin is removed from our lives, but I do know that love has set for herself that task, and love never faileth. Some day we shall stand complete before the Father and we shall not regret the suffering that wrought our complete emancipation.

In the third place, love has set for herself the task of bringing in a perfect brotherhood among the children of men. For ages the world has been but a great battlefield where the hand of Cain has been against his brother Abel, until the sod has been soaked in human blood. Nameless atrocities have been committed against innocence and virtue. Hearts have been broken by cruelty, and even within the bounds of the church have been heard the moans of suffering innocence. Even the professed church has erected the stakes and kindled the fires of persecution, and the cause of

Christ has been hindered by those who claim to be followers of the Christ. If we could divert into channels of Christian service all the power that is expended in theological wrangling and personal bickerings, what wonders could be accomplished. Well, love has set herself to that task, and she will not fail until that end is attained. If we are desiring to see an end of useless controversies and personal contentions, then we must take love into our lives and give her right of way. We can make friends of our bitterest enemies by loving them, and love can bring perfect harmony out of the discords that now distract us. We have been trying by mechanical organizations and denominational federations to bring religious peace into the world, but we have accomplished but little. The only power that will ever drive conflict out will be the bringing in of the spirit of love. That is love's task in the world, and she will neither fail nor be discouraged until that end is attained.

III. *Love's Single Instrument.* Does someone ask, "How can these things be accomplished? What instrument is to be used? What method followed in pursuing this end?" The answer is simple. Love begins by planting a seed in a single human heart, and then letting it grow and spread

until it reaches other human hearts, until the whole world shall be transformed. Nearly two thousand years ago a single Galilean carpenter enthroned love in his heart. Only love was allowed to speak through his lips; only love was permitted to use his hands and his feet. At Pentecost this Jesus called for others to unite with him, and of that early church it was said, "Behold how they love one another." Love does not require a great army or an elaborate machinery, but she must have human hearts. How many of us are willing now to open the door of our hearts and bid love come in as a reigning monarch, and then hold all the forces of our lives to do love's will? It may begin here this morning with just one man or one woman; but if it is begun it will spread until others open their hearts, and the place is flooded with a new power and a new joy. When I am willing to say that love shall have the throne in my life I will at once become an instrument in her hand for conquering some other life, and thus she will go from conquering to conquer.

We are calling today for volunteers under the banner of love. Let us enlist against all unkindness of thought and of speech and of act, and soon we will know by experience that which we profess in our creed, that "love never faileth."

XIII

ENLARGEMENT AND ENRICHMENT

(*A New Year's sermon.*)

2 Corinthians 6: 13—Be ye also enlarged.

It is related of Michael Angelo, that on one occasion he entered the studio of one of his students during his absence, and inspected a sketch on which the young man had been working. Noticing that the design was too cramped, he took a crayón and wrote across its face, "Amplius." Returning on the following day, he observed that in a measure his instructions had been followed, but not to the extent that he desired, and again he wrote across it, "Amplius." He returned again a third time, and still the picture was too small, and once more he wrote across it, "Amplius." "Larger, Larger, Larger," was the motto of the great artist, and "Larger, Larger, Larger," was the cry of the great apostle. Littleness is one of the great perils confronting both the church as a whole and the individual believer. We cultivate

a little plot that barely keeps us from starving, while the main field is overgrown with thorns and thistles. With many the only thought they have of the gospel is a way by which they may avoid falling into hell, and secure admittance into the place that we call heaven. We mistake enlistment for achievement. We are willing to wear the uniform, but do not want to risk soiling it in actual conflict. We are babes in the cradle who never want to leave their comfortable nest. Of course, we are alive, but we go on living at a "poor dying rate." There is surely something wrong with the child of five years who is no larger than when he was five days old. The question is not simply, "Am I alive?" but "Am I growing?"

Not unlike to such a child was the church in Corinth. They had gladly accepted the doctrine of the Saviourship of Jesus, and then settled down to enjoy a religion that had in it some faith and but little consecration. Paul wrote two letters to them and warned them against practices that were eating the heart out of their joys, and making them a reproach when they ought to be a glory to the name of Christ. At first they took offense at Paul's plain speaking, but he continued his exhortations, and in the end they came to love him all the more for his plain speaking. This morn-

ing I want to pass his message on to you in the hope that together we may strive for life's larger things.

There are just two points that I want to emphasize, and they are Enlargement and Enrichment, for the one naturally follows the other.

I. *Enlargement.* This text suggests so many different lines of treatment that one is embarrassed by the wealth of homiletical material that lies before him. I might, if I were so inclined, take all the time at my disposal in discussing the need of the enlargement of our membership roll, of our Bible school attendance, and of our contributions for the various departments of our denominational work; but I am quite sure all these will come of themselves if only we, as individual believers, are enlarged in ourselves. You will recall that it was William Carey's sermon on "Enlarge the place of thy tent and stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation," that kindled the great foreign missionary fire that has burned for more than a hundred years, and is destined to spread over all the earth. Because of this I want to make my appeal personal today, and I would suggest:

First, that we enlarge our conception of God himself. To the Jews even Jehovah was looked upon as little more than a tribal deity, whose

mercies were reserved for the sons and daughters of Abraham, and who hated all Gentiles even as the Jews hated them. One of the most startling messages of Jesus, and one of the things for which they crucified him, was his declaration that the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, was the God of the whole human family. One of the hardest lessons the apostles had to learn, even after they had heard it from the lips of Jesus, was that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews in the great covenant of grace. Simon Peter had made great progress in the Christian life when he could say, "I perceive that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." Of course, being Gentiles, we are quite sure that God loves us even as he loves the Jews; but are we equally sure that God loves the unbelieving world even as he loves those who are of the household of faith? Of course, he gives more to true believers than he does to the unbelievers, but that is not because of a difference in his love, but in their capacity. The rebellious child has to be treated differently from the submissive one—not because the parent loves the one more than the other, but because the one has larger capacity to receive than the other. The room with the curtains run up will receive more

sunlight than the one in which they are all down, but the sun is as eager to fill the one as the other. We would not be so critical with some people if we only remembered how dear they are to the heart of God, and how we hurt him when we are unkind to them, and how we please him when we show them mercy. God so loved the world—not a part of it—that he gave his only Son that the world through him might be saved. Brethren, let us write across the portrait of our little Baptist God, and our little Protestant God, and our little Christian God, “Amplius”—larger—until he fills the whole world, and we join with him in the great endeavor to bring it all to his feet.

In the second place, let us enlarge our conception of the gospel. I am wondering how we would define the gospel if we were called upon to do so. It is easy to say that the word is the combination of two old Saxon words, god and speil, good and tidings. But what is the great truth wrapped up in those two little words? The popular idea seems to be that by assenting to certain statements about God and Jesus Christ we secure a title to a place in heaven by and by. Like the people in Corinth, there are some who place their names on the church roll, submit to the two great ordinances, and then go on living the old life of self-indulgence. Chris-

tianity is the incarnation of the Spirit of Jesus, and is designed to save us from our sin. The cross is but the key with which God seeks to open the human heart that he may go in and cleanse it. Salvation is not an insurance policy against possible damnation by and by, but it is a treatment that will make us immune to damnation at any time and in any place. I am not saying that the moment Christ is received all sinful propensities will disappear, any more than I would expect perfect health to result from the first dose of medicine. But the healing work will begin then, and will go on until perfect health is restored. The acceptance of Jesus into the life is but the commencement of the great work of eternal restoration.

In the third place, we need to enlarge our conception of the Bible. All through the centuries this old Book has been attacked, and some people have almost lost their faith because they could not answer all the questions that have been raised. The trouble is not that men cannot find in it the will of God, or the way of life, but because they demand of the Bible what it has never claimed to be. If we would but get clearly in our minds the twofold mission of the book—to reveal God to man, and man to himself—we would be saved

from many of our perplexities. Some have tried to make it a treatise on natural science, and have wandered into unbelief. Others have made it a treatise on sociology, and still others would make it an authority on biography. I am not a Darwinian evolutionist, neither do I belong to that company who declare that if the Darwinian theory were proved they would throw away their Bibles. The Bible tells us that God created the heavens and the earth and all that are in them. Now as to his method in creation we can stand with open mind. I do not accept the theory of three or more Isaiahs, but if there were a dozen of them that would not lessen in the slightest the value of that peerless prophecy. There are those who consider the book of Job a great drama. What if it is, so long as it teaches us the great truth of faith in God and the faithfulness of God? The story of the prodigal loses none of its teaching value because it is in the form of a parable. What we all need to remember is that Jesus Christ had before him the same Old Testament that we have today. To him it either has no errors, or if it had they were too insignificant to be mentioned. In this matter we would do well to follow his example. To him it was the Word of God, and as such he wielded it against all the assaults of the

enemy. When Satan sought to lure our Lord into a controversy over the book, Jesus did not argue about it but gave him a thrust with it. Nothing so wounds the head of Satan as the confidence of God's people in the Word that he has given.

In the fourth place, we need to enlarge our sympathies with the people among whom we live, and particularly with our own brethren. We do not find it hard to make allowance for the conduct of those we love, but the impossible thing is to love people by trying. What we can do, and what we ought to do is to search out the attractive things about the people whom we do not love, and pass over the things which we wish they did not do; and in a little while we shall find ourselves loving them without trying. When we do not like people they may do a score of beautiful things and we never notice them; but if they make one mis-step we are swift with our denunciation. Just because we do not know the inner life of others, and the hidden battles they have to fight, we ought to be slow to pass judgment on them. I recall a story that came to my knowledge forty years ago. In one of the largest printing establishments in Boston, Mass., there was a young man who earned large wages and yet never spent a cent in treats. He was nicknamed "Shylock,"

and when it became known that he was on the street every morning at five o'clock selling papers, and again every evening, he became the object of contempt and ridicule through the whole establishment. Investigation showed that he slept in a little room in one of the cheapest tenements in the city, paying but one dollar a week for the accommodation. He ate the cheapest food that he could buy, no matter how stale it was. That continued for two years, and then the truth came out. He had a blind sister, and hearing of a great oculist in England, he saved his money and sent her there for treatment, starving himself in his effort to save her vision. Then his shopmates collected a lot of money to help him, but he refused it, adding, "All I desired, and all I needed was a little bit of sympathy, but you withheld that, and now that my sister is cured, I can have the comfort and the sympathy of her presence." Brethren, just because we do not know the burdens that others are carrying, let us always put the best, and not the worst possible interpretation on their conduct.

Once more, let me suggest that we enlarge our expectations. We have accomplished something during the year that is past, but we ought to expect larger things. They tell us that men and

women are old when they begin to live in the past, and draw their comfort from the days that are gone. The same is true of a church. We ought not to be continually harking back to the days that are past, but with the spirit of youth we should turn our faces toward the future. A great statesman was one day asked what he considered the most contemptible thing in the world, and he at once replied, "The worthless son of a worthy man." Just because this church has had a splendid ancestry, and can show on her family tree some of the noblest names in our Baptist denomination, is an added reason why we should expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.

II. *Enrichment.* "Quo bono?"—What's the good?—is apt to be in our thoughts if not on our lips when we are asked for a great forward movement. I am not censuring that question. We have a right to ask the value of a work before undertaking it. I have not time to enumerate all the advantages that will accompany an enlargement of our outlook and activities.

In the first place, it will put a new note in our songs. We must lift our service out of the ditch of duty and place it in the garden of privilege. Jacob tells us that the seven years that he

served for Rachel seemed but as a few days, because of the love that he had for her. Do you think he felt the same about the seven years that he served for Leah? When we really fall in love with our Lord, service for him is never wearisome, and his comradeship is always a delight. Oh, the joy of conscious growth! Some of us can still remember the days when we stood up to be measured and found that we had added another inch to our stature. There was even greater joy when we found ourselves making progress intellectually and were able to pass our examinations with honor. But the soul's supreme joy is when we discover that we are a little more like the Master. To look into our own heart and see the face of Jesus shining there, is to taste of the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

In the second place, this enlargement will strengthen us in the hour of trial. Our afflictions will seem light when we see in them the hand of the Great Physician working for the elimination of that which impoverishes the soul. Shortly after the Great War I was talking with a returned soldier who went over the top at Vimy Ridge. He showed me where the doctor took three bullets out of his body after the field was won. Then he added, "I did not know that I had been hit till

after the fight was over. In the enthusiasm of the charge I did not feel the sting of the bullets." Believe me, brethren, we would not be so quick to take offense at a trifling slight or bit of adverse criticism if we were in the midst of a battle for the glory of God and for the salvation of men. The Christian life is not a sham battle, fought with blank cartridges, but a life and death struggle with the hosts of darkness. Daniel tells us that the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

In the third place, this enlarged vision will commend us to men. I do not agree with those who tell us that the church is losing her grip on men. On the contrary, I believe her grip was never stronger than it is today. Not only has she a larger membership, but a larger proportion of her members are actively engaged in the work of saving the world. But a larger outlook and more heroic endeavor will bring still other strong men into our ranks. Humanity is in love with large things, and we must bring to the world a message that appeals to the spirit of heroism. A strike riot will call out the police and the militia, but it takes a great war to arouse the general and admirals, the army and the navy. Men are not standing aloof from the church because she is

attempting too much, but because she is attempting too little. It used to be said that it was useless to talk to J. P. Morgan in figures less than millions. The cause of Christ is greater than any financial enterprise, and we should treat it largely.

Finally, the enlargement of our outlook will add glory to the cause of our common Master. It was when Peter and John risked everything on the poor cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple that the people took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. So long as the Egyptian magicians could reproduce the miracles of Moses, the cause of emancipation made but little progress, but when he accomplished things in which they were helpless, then the work of emancipation was assured. We must surprise the world by the greatness of our faith and the service of our hands.

Brethren, let me come close to your hearts today and repeat the apostolic injunction, "Be ye also enlarged." I am here as a recruiting officer for the King. Who will enlist today and make this the year of your spiritual birth? Begin this year with God, and it will be the best year of all your life. If you have received him, then come into closer fellowship with the Master and begin a campaign that is not to end until he takes the throne and reigns, whose right it is to reign.

XIV

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

Galatians 4: 6—Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Have you ever stood upon some lofty hill or mountainside in the early morning and looked out upon the surrounding scenery, shrouded in the dim gray light, when the moving shadows looked like creeping monsters, while an oppressive silence brooded over all? And then have you watched as shaft after shaft of light shot up through the darkness, until at last the sun appeared in all his glory, crowning the somber mountain peaks with beauty, and flooding the valley with light, while from every bush and bramble rang out the songs of birds? I have a vivid recollection of my first visit to the Rocky Mountains. It was after midnight when our train reached Bamff, our first stopping place. My friend and I were the only two passengers to alight, and as there was no carriage from the hotel to meet us, we started out to walk the distance. Only those who have experi-

enced the solitude of the great mountains can understand the hush that falls at midnight among the lonely peaks. All nature seemed asleep, and the great peaks, like silent sentinels, guarded her repose. Arriving at the hotel, we decided to remain up and watch the coming of the morning. First the stars began to grow dim, and the darkness seemed to deepen. But a little later the snow-crowned mountain peaks began to brighten, and then the light flowed down into the valley, and all the birds commenced to sing. In these two views of the one scene we may discover the difference between Jewish legalism and Christian faith—between the bondage of the law and the liberty of the gospel. The Hebrews saw the dim outline of grace through the starlight of prophecy, while we see it more fully in the sunlight of revelation. The human mind is slow to relinquish its hold on an old idea. Eyes that have long been peering into the darkness are blinded by the sudden flashing of a brilliant light. It is not to be wondered at that the early church was slow to relinquish doctrines that had been held for centuries. As the leaves will cling to the tree long after they are dead, and have to be pushed off by the new growth, so did the dead leaves of

Jewish legalism cling tenaciously to the parent tree.

The church at Galatia, made up of converted Jews and Gentiles, clung tenaciously to old Hebrew forms and ceremonies. After Paul had left them, the evil grew apace, until he had to write them a letter in which he accused them of having been bewitched by the Jews who were in their midst. In that letter he shows where the work of the law begins and ends. He points out to them that the giving of the law was but temporary—it was but the schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, and that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” In the two verses preceding our text Paul reminds the Galatians that “In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons.” And then he adds, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” What the Galatian Christians needed to know, and what we all need to know, is that every Hebrew altar had its fulfilment in the Cross, every bleeding sacrifice in the crucified Christ, and every shred of ritualism was consummated in the rending of the veil of the

Temple. Just as the Lord's Supper points to a specific date—till he come—and when he comes it will pass away forever, so did the old forms and ceremonies point to the first advent of our Lord, and with his appearance they passed away forever. I think I can make this clear to you by a simple illustration. Do you see Jochabed as she fashions the ark of bulrushes? Every reed is tested, and every crevice sealed with pitch, because therein is to be carried the hope of Israel. But when the peril was over we hear no more of the ark. It had accomplished its purpose, and then it passed away. The old Hebrew forms and ceremonies were but the ark of bulrushes, and when there emerged therefrom the world's Redeemer they were ready to pass away.

There are three things that I want to press upon your attention today, and these are: Our Position, Our Possession, and Our Profession.

I. *Our Position.* "Because ye are sons." In an earlier chapter Paul tells us how we came into that relationship. He says we are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We are members of God's family, not through the operation of God's law, but through the redemption that is in his Son. If we are sons of God, then we are sure of at least three things.

In the first place, we are sure of his love. God is perfect in all his offices as well as in all his acts. Every true father loves his own child, and in the last analysis will surrender everything, even to life itself, for the good of his children. For them he toils early and late; for them he plans and saves; and for them he abandons many a pleasure and endures many a pain. Few things are more persistently preached, and more generally disbelieved, than the love of God for his individual children. Because he will not pamper us and spoil us, we pout and fret like naughty children. Because he insists that we take our place in life's great battle, we deny either his goodness or his wisdom, or both. Let us pause for a moment and take a look back across the centuries, and note how, with a love undying, he followed the children of men. Think of the wickedness of the antediluvian race; of the perverseness of the chosen people; of the rejection and crucifixion of his only begotten Son, and of the slaughter of his saints through all the dark ages; and yet through it all and in it all his loving kindness never faltered. His love does not always operate in the way that we would expect or prefer, but it always acts in the right way and, therefore, in the best way. Many children are spoiled, not because

they are not loved, but because parental love has been ignorant, and in its zeal to give pleasure and avoid pain, it has harmed the one it desired to bless. God's wisdom is equal to his love, and he always knows what is best for you and for me, and that is the thing he always sends. Not long since I saw a mother administering a bitter medicine to her sick child. The little fellow took the cup and drank it to the bottom, and then as he handed it back he said, "Thank you, mother." If in that spirit we would but take our sorrows and disappointments from the hand of our Father, we might gladden his heart as well as hasten our recovery.

In the second place, if we are sons then we may be sure of our Father's care. It is the very nature of a father to care for his own child. If any evil comes to your child or mine it is either because we were ignorant of the peril or were unable to prevent it. Since nothing can take place apart from God's knowledge, and no case occurs that is beyond his power to reach, we may rest in perfect assurance that all things are working together for our good. We often wish things for those we love, but our means are limited, and we cannot perform; but God's power is equal to his desire, and what he wishes that he can will. This

is an old truth, but we need to hear it often. With its sweet music ringing in the soul we can look up, without fear or faltering, when the storm cloud has gathered and shut out the sunshine of joy. When the winds of adversity blow with ever-increasing velocity and our frail craft is tossed like a shell upon the billows, and there is not a single light flashing out of the darkness, we can still sing:

“So 'mid the wildering maze of things,
Uptossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed star my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.
I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.”

In the third place, being children, we are sure of his discipline. But at the very outset let me remind you that it is discipline and not punishment. The law uses pain as a punishment, but grace always uses it as a medicine. In other words, the law smites in order to cause pain, while grace smites in order to impart ultimate pleasure. In the olden days British naval officers punished deserters by whipping them. Forty lashes on the bare back was bad enough, but after the whipping the culprit was handed over to the ship's surgeon.

To prevent the wounds from festering they were washed in a strong solution of salt and water. In this case the pain was worse than that inflicted by the lash, but it was inflicted, not in wrath, but in mercy. Its purpose was not for hurting, but for healing. Whom the law hateth it smiteth, but whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. When God sends sorrow to his children his purpose is to bring them closer to himself. I remember reading sometime ago of a youth who had gone to college, and after a while became so absorbed in sports and social functions that he neglected to write home. Weeks passed without their receiving a line, and the mother became very much agitated, and wanted to take a journey of nearly a thousand miles to see what was wrong. The father assured her that they would soon have a letter. She asked why he thought so, and he replied, "I have not sent him his monthly check which was due two days ago." The following day the letter came. Sometimes God has to withhold our needed supplies of health, and comfort, and gladness to remind us of our dependence upon him. We are like the prodigal who seemed to have quite forgotten his father until, in a far country, he felt the pinch of hunger. If God has taken from you something that you prized, or is with-

holding something that you greatly desire, it may be simply because you have forgotten him, and he wants to come into closer fellowship with you.

II. *Our Possession.* "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Of course, we all assent to the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but we need to remember what that indwelling implies.

In the first place, it guarantees divine guidance. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." The trouble with the church in Galatia, and the trouble with the churches in America, is the advent of new teachers who undertake to usurp the office of the Holy Ghost. They were putting the new wine of the kingdom into the old wine skins of Judaism with disastrous results. Never since the dawn of Christianity has there been such an abundance of new teachers as at the present day. Mormonism, Spiritualism, Eddyism, Russellism, Theosophy, New Thought, and kindred movements spring up like wild mustard in a wheat field, and many a true child of God is troubled by their Babel of voices. At such a time there is just one wise course, and that is to take the Spirit's textbook and let him interpret it to you. While Fundamentalists and Modernists are engaged in their

strenuous struggle it should be enough for you and me to sit down with our Bibles and permit the Holy Spirit to interpret it to our souls. Not a wider reading of speculative philosophy or science (falsely so-called), but a profounder study of the word of truth is the supreme need of the church today. Bankers will tell you that it is well-nigh impossible to pass a counterfeit bill in a bank. The teller, trained in the handling of bills, can, by the very texture of the paper, detect the fraud. Men who are versed in their Bibles will not be deceived by modern teachers who undertake to usurp the office of the Holy Spirit.

In the second place, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of complete cleansing. When he enters the life it is to bind the strong man and cast him out. The struggle will be long and fierce, for Satan does not easily yield up the heart that he has occupied for years; but if we will but let the Spirit have his way he will accomplish that to which he has set his hand. I grant you that the process of elimination is painful, but the perfect health that comes at the end is infinite compensation for all that we endure. Of course, there are quack doctors who will assure you that by a painless treatment and in a very brief period they can guarantee a perfect cure, but all who

have ever tried them have found in the end that their last case is worse than the first.

In the third place, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of ultimate triumph. God tells me that I am to rejoice in my sufferings. I cannot do that yet, but the day is coming when, like my Master, I can go singing into Gethsemane. He tells me I must love my enemies. As yet I can scarcely keep from hating them, but a time is coming when I shall love them even as Christ loves me. One who reached the very summit in mathematical work tells us that when first he was given a textbook in geometry, he threw it down, exclaiming, "I can never solve these problems, and I am not going to try." But under the leadership of a faithful teacher he not only tried but succeeded, and became a leader for others who had to solve the same questions. The day is coming when we shall all be able to say out of a deep conviction, "Not my will, but thine be done."

III. *Our Profession.* "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." As you know, "Abba" is a diminutive form of father. It is a child's name for a parent, and corresponds with our word "papa." When God says, "Thou art my son," I am to reply, "Thou art my Father." There are three things wrapped up in that cry:

The first is lordship. When I say Father I confess my obligation to submit to his rule. What a mighty force this church would be if each individual member not only recognized the Fatherhood of God as a theory, but rendered him a filial obedience—if, as each new problem arose, we first of all consulted him as to what should be done, and then followed his direction, no matter how much the flesh recoiled therefrom. It has been frequently said that fatherhood was the new term brought to us by Jesus Christ. That is quite true, but fatherhood implies sonship. You cannot have a father without a child, neither can you have a child without a father. We are all ready enough to claim from God the care that children have a right to expect, but are we as keen to render to God what he has a right to expect from his children? To know what God wants us to do, and then refuse to do it, is to repudiate his lordship, and to line ourselves with those who oppose his will. He has declared that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

In the second place, sonship implies fellowship. The general of an army has lordship over his troops, but he has no fellowship with them. They cannot sleep in the same tent with him, nor eat at the same table. But the children of God

have all the rights and privileges of the family circle. I recall being in court during a murder trial, when a little boy entered the room and made his way toward the bench. He was stopped by an officer who told him that he must not disturb the judge. "I do not want to see the judge, I want my papa," was the reply. The judge took the little fellow on his knee, kissed him, and then went on with the case. While others addressed the man as "Your lordship," and "My lord," the child always addressed him as "Papa." While it is true that Jehovah is the supreme Judge, it is nevertheless our privilege to approach him as Father.

Finally, sonship implies partnership. The interest of the mere servant in his master's business is simply that of a wage-earner. Apart from his wages he has no direct interest in the business. But the son knows that every dollar added to capital account is addition to his own coming inheritance. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. You will recall that in the parable of the talents each man was given back, not only the talent, but also its earnings. All that we add to the Father's estate will be our own possession in the great day to come.

Now, brethren, let us realize our position as members of the family of God and, while claiming all that is rightly ours, let us return to the Father all that belongs to him.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Galatians 5: 1—Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

There is a wide difference between being set free and made free. The one is physical and the other spiritual; the one has to do with environment and the other with character. Jesus standing bound before Pilate was a free man, while the Roman governor, wielding almost imperial authority, was a slave to his fears and his ambitions. Felix, while sitting upon the judgment seat, was in bondage to his lusts, and was terrified at the mention of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," while Paul, wearing his shackles, could look his foes in the face and say of a truth, "I was free-born." The Hebrews as a nation were passionately devoted to liberty. To achieve it for themselves they faced the wrath of Pharaoh and endured the terrible march across the desert. Once settled in Canaan they defended themselves

against the assaults of the surrounding nations and, in the face of fearful odds, maintained for centuries their political freedom. Their defense of Jerusalem against the assaults of the Romans under Titus stands until this day as a marvel of human courage and endurance. So sensitive were they upon this point that they were sometimes led to overstep the bounds of truth in their boasting. When Jesus accused them of being the slaves of sin, they quickly replied, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage." They forgot their four hundred years in Egypt, and their seventy years in Babylon; they forgot that while they were making their boast the Roman eagle floated over Jerusalem.

We of this land are a liberty-loving people; or, at least we are a liberty-boasting people. It was indeed a great day for humanity, as well as for America, when a mere handful of colonists won their political freedom from the great nation on the other side of the sea, and flung wide the doors of a continent as a refuge for the poor and the oppressed. The tyrant of political oppression has found no resting place upon the face of this continent. For a little time he attempted to entrench himself, but in a war, as fierce as earth has ever seen, physical slavery was swept from this land,

and today the black-skinned Ethiopian and the pale-faced Saxon have equal rights as citizens.

But political freedom is not the only nor yet the highest type of liberty. In too many cases what men boastingly call their liberty is but a mark of their bondage. On her way to the scaffold, Madame Roland exclaimed: "O Liberty! what crimes have been committed in thy name." The bloody French Revolution had for its watchword, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." The anarchist of today displays that great word upon his red banner. Like Samson of old, this gift of God is often compelled to grind in the prison house of the tyrant. The very symbol of freedom has itself been taken captive. Men talk of liberty when they mean the wildest form of license, and their boasted freedom is often the basest sort of bondage. Freedom is not the absence of restraint, but perfect submission to the law of righteousness. It is deliverance from the bondage of sin and death through perfect conformity to the law of the spirit of life. The tramp roaming through the country, robbing hen coops, and dodging the police and the farmer's dog, is not as free as the mechanic who goes to work each morning at the call of a whistle, and toils all day to earn an honest wage. The free soul is the one that is in

perfect harmony with every righteous restraint, and that gladly responds to every call of duty.

The church at Galatia was in a state of fermentation. Jews had come into the brotherhood, and declared that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Hebrew law, or their faith in Jesus would be of none effect. The fierce conflict that began in Judea had spread to Greece, and threatened the very existence of the church. Paul's letter to the Galatians was designed to settle, and settle forever, the difference between a living faith and the forms through which it is to be expressed. The one is essential and the other immaterial. The one is the substance and the other the mere shadow. The shadow will vary according to the angle at which the light strikes the substance, but the substance remains the same even if there be no shadow at all. The thing we are to contend for is Christian liberty, and any attempt to force faith into an old mould is like putting new wine in the old wine skins. Let me direct your thought this morning to the Liberty of Love, and the Bondage of Fear.

I. *The Liberty of Love.* On one occasion Jesus exclaimed to the multitude that followed him, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." There is a kind of liberty

possessed by those who turn their backs upon God, and give free rein to all their baser desires. They are free from certain restrictions that are binding upon the men and the women who bear the yoke of Christ. But to the liberty which Christ bestows, the liberty that is really worth while, they are absolute strangers. What are a few of the characteristics of this true freedom?

In the first place, Jesus Christ gives a man freedom from the fear of punishment. The human soul knows no greater tyranny than that which issues from the dread of an angry God. Men do not so much shrink from death itself as from the dread of

"Something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of."

In every age and every land cruel and crafty men have used this fear as a chain with which to bind their captives. What must have been the soul-racking torture of the father as he laid the form of his own babe upon the red-hot arms of Moloch to appease that angry deity, and of the mothers who cast their babes to the crocodiles, hoping thereby to win the favor of an angry god?

Read the story of the dark ages, when men and women mutilated their bodies, tramped on weary pilgrimages, sacrificed their homes, and lived in filth and poverty, hoping by their wretchedness to turn away the wrath of Jehovah. There is no more terrible slavery on earth than that which is based upon a misunderstanding of the character of God. The very first work of Christ is to free the soul therefrom.

Standing in the midst of a people who were so afraid of the God they worshiped that they would not speak his name, he announced that this God was their Father, and that they had all the rights and privileges of children. Moreover, he assured them that one part of his mission to the world was to remove their misapprehension, and give them to drink of the wine of God's favor. But there was the sin question, and what was to be done with that? Must they not, through physical sufferings and mental anguish, make atonement for the wrong they had done? He assured them that he had himself come to put away the sin, because the Father would not suffer it to stand between him and those who desired to see his face in peace. I think it is worthy of note that Jesus never attempted to explain the atonement. He simply proclaimed the fact and asked men and women

to appropriate the freedom that it brings. I can quite believe that very few of the slaves in the South could read Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation, or understand the art by which it was written. Nor did they need to. Their freedom did not rest upon their interpretation of the document or their knowledge of the deliberations of the cabinet, or the motives that led the President to sign it, but upon the proclamation itself. Jesus has not sent his church into the world to explain the mysteries of his incarnation, the significance of his atonement, or the power of his resurrection, but to declare to all the world that he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and that the door of life eternal is open for all who choose to enter there.

In the second place, Christ delivers us from the fear of evil. Superstition is rampant in the world, even among the most enlightened. Half of the trivial incidents of everyday life are accounted as omens of either good or ill, and chiefly ill. A broken shoestring, spilt salt, an upset chair, or a bad dream will shadow a whole day with gloomy forebodings. Whence all this nonsense originated no one can tell, but that it is a real source of bondage to many, there can be no doubt. I suspect that behind it is the sense of sin.

Because we feel that our acts merit punishment, we are ever on the watch for it. When Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall, although he did not understand a word of it, he became terror-stricken. Why did he not expect it to bring him a promise of increased prosperity, and yet greater power? His guilty heart was before Daniel with an interpretation of that mysterious message. When the soul is alienated from God it will naturally interpret every strange incident as an omen of evil or an expression of the divine displeasure. Jesus makes us free from this by assuring us that the Master of the universe is our Father in heaven, and that he makes all things work together for our good. He who feeds the sparrows will not neglect his children. No little bird falls without the divine notice. He is never vanquished by the powers of darkness, and nothing will be permitted to come nigh our dwelling place unless it brings to us a blessing.

One of the great promises God makes to those who trust him is that they shall be quiet from the fear of evil. In a moment of exultant faith David exclaimed, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The freedom that we have in Christ

does not mean that we can always understand the movements of Providence, nor that we can at once see the blessing that is wrapped up in a storm-cloud, but rather that we have a confidence like his, that whatever God sends, or permits to enter our lives, shall in the end be to our highest good as well as to his greatest glory. It is your privilege and mine to be as free from fear of evil as are the unfallen angels who continually do the perfect will of God. As we do not need to understand all the mysteries of the Atonement in order to partake of its blessings, so we do not need to be able to fathom the deep of God's purposes in order to sail into the port of perfect peace. The dove does not need to understand the law of gravitation in order to fold her wings and drop into her nest. No more do we need to know the mysteries of Providence in order to rest in the love of Jehovah.

In the third place, Jesus frees us from the bondage of custom. What a frightful taskmaster it is! If we spent half as much time trying to please God as we do to satisfy the whims of society and the wishes of other people, we would be saints indeed. The fear of sin is small compared with the dread of "Mrs. Grundy." There are some who will mortgage their hope of heaven

in order to purchase admission into a certain social set. To be out of the fashion, in either dress or deportment, is to feel the lash of self-condemnation. Think of the disagreeable things that we do each day, not at the dictates of conscience, but because of the opinions of other people. Scores of pleasant things we must renounce, not because they are evil, but because someone else objects to our having them. I am not pleading for a disregard of the feelings of others, nor urging that we should forget that we belong to a community, and should respect the rights of our associates, but I do contend that others have no right to force their tastes upon us, and if they do attempt it we are under no obligation to consider them.

One cannot read the story of the life of Jesus without being impressed with his absolute freedom from the tyranny of self-constituted leaders. There was a social set that objected to his mingling with publicans and sinners, and there was a religious community that demanded conformity to laws written and unwritten. But he moved calmly on, doing always and doing only the things that appeared right to himself. This is your privilege and mine. We stand before God as individuals, and when we can look into his face and say with our Master, "I do always the things

that please him," then are we free indeed. If God gave us an intellect he meant that we should use it, and not borrow the brains of someone else. He appoints each man the captain of his own soul, and we have no right to place the tiller in the hands of another. God and myself, these are the two great facts to me, and all other relationships in life are to be subordinated to them. At the point where social customs or ecclesiastical laws attempt to bind me, I am to assert my freedom in Christ Jesus.

In the fourth place, Christ has made us free from the fear of failure. Never was a life beset with more difficulties; never did a man meet with fiercer opposition. From the hour when he came up from the water of baptism, on to the day when he yielded up his spirit in death, all the forces of evil combined to defeat his purpose. But no drop of fear ever leaked into his soul. He had to face many things that were hard, but none that appeared impossible. He was as sure of the kingdom when he agonized in Gethsemane as he was when the light of transfiguration glory illuminated his face. There were times when the way by which he was led seemed mysterious, but there was never a doubt that it led to the Father's house. We do well to be cautious, but we should never be

fearful. We lose half of the joy of health through our dread of contagion. We are weakened in life's battle by our anticipation of defeat. The liberty that Christ gives is the assurance that triumph will certainly come. According to him life does not consist in having but in being. The time for getting may be short, but the time for attaining is endless. He throws open to us the door of eternity, and gives us a title deed to all the ages, so that we need not hesitate to attempt great things on the plea that there is not time for their accomplishment. A thousand reverses should not destroy our enthusiasm, because there is still ample time to regain what has been lost.

The work that our Lord began on earth nineteen centuries ago is not yet completed, although the stately temple is rising grandly; but he is not more sure of ultimate victory this morning, while sitting at the right hand of the Father, and clothed with all authority and all power, than he was when they nailed him to a cross, and mockingly called upon him to come down from the tree if he were the Christ indeed. Our Master takes us into partnership with himself, and at the outset frees us from all fear of failure, that all our powers of heart and mind and hand may be free to serve and to enjoy. Even when we come

to the end of this life, when the heart and the flesh are failing; when the shadows of the great valley are settling about us, it is our privilege to exclaim with David, "I will fear no evil." This was the confidence that carried the martyrs singing to the stake; this is what Paul meant when he exclaimed, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ."

II. *The Bondage of Fear.* How are we to escape from this horrible bondage—the shackles that gall the mind and soul?

In the first place, there must be a voluntary choice. In other words, there must be a sincere desire to escape from the slavery. God himself cannot make a man free without the consent of the soul. For Jehovah to force us to do his will would be but to transfer us from one master to the other. While it is true that the service would be immeasurably better than that which we perform under the dominion of Satan, it would be bondage nevertheless. Christianity is not a change of masters but a change of condition. It is liberation from the law of sin and death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Just as

Lincoln's proclamation did not take the slave away from his master, but gave him the right to go if he pleased, so the gospel of Jesus Christ is not an arbitrary law, but a revelation of privilege. It is true that Paul often speaks of himself as the bonds slave of Jesus, but the bond was one of love and not law.

In the second place, there must be an appropriating faith. Our largest liberty is to come through our confidence in the Captain of our salvation. I am convinced of the ultimate triumph of truth, not through what she has accomplished in the past, nor what she is achieving today, because I know that in other times error has for a while triumphed over truth, and a midnight of ignorance has followed a midday of knowledge. The brilliant day of apostolic preaching was followed by the long night of the dark ages. Israel's triumphant entrance into the land of Canaan was followed by apostasy and captivity. The assurance of triumph must be found in the proclamation of our Lord.

In 1807 the government of Great Britain passed a bill declaring that on a certain date the slaves in the empire should be free. On the evening before the dawn of that great day for the slaves they gathered in a great throng, and spent the

early hours of the evening in singing and praising God. But as the midnight hour approached a great hush fell upon them, and in a silence that was oppressive they awaited the supreme moment. As the clock struck the midnight hour there burst from every lip the shout of "Free! free!" And why? Because they believed that the British government would make good its promise. The path of faith is still the way to liberty. If we are to escape from our spiritual bondage it must be through believing.

But if our liberty is to be a joyful thing there must be the wedding of consecration with faith. Gladness is the flower of which confidence is the seed. In faith we realize our freedom, but in consecration we claim our citizenship. Just because this is the land of the free, we require that all who come here shall conduct themselves as the citizens of a free country. A good law is not a restriction upon a man's freedom, but a caution against license. It is not a restraint upon his joy, but an opportunity for enrichment. If we are asked to serve Christ it is only because in that way, and that way alone, may we attain to all the blessedness of liberty. Wherever there is life there will be activity, and if we would not

have the sorrow that goes with sin, we must have the activity of consecration.

Finally, if we are to have the largest liberty, there must be a living expectation. I mean that there must be something more than a mere assent to the doctrine of Christ's ultimate triumph—there must be an earnest looking for it. The thing that is outstanding in the apostolic age is the eagerness with which they watched for and expected the return of our Lord. They did not look across thousands of years in the hope that it might some day appear, but they watched for it with each opening day. It is true that they did not look far enough, but we are in the greater danger of looking too far. While Jesus did not intimate when he would return, he certainly urged the people to assume the attitude of continual expectation. We are as sentinels on duty, who are to watch whether or not the enemy is near. The fact that no foe appears for a week or a month does not lessen the need of vigilance. Indeed, the enemy may never come, but he for whom we watch is sure to appear, and every hour draws us closer to that day.

“On the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
While still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home.
Its song of triumph surges
O'er all the thunderous din,
The waves may break in failure,
But the tide is sure to win.

“O mighty sea, thy message
In clanging spray is cast;
Within God's plan of progress,
It matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin,
The waves may be defeated,
But the tide is sure to win.”

XVI

A MORNING CALL

Ephesians 5: 14—Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Of all the angels appointed by God to wait upon the children of men, there is none more gentle or more welcome than sleep. She is indeed "Tired nature's sweet restorer," who with tender hand "knits up the raveled sleeve of care." We may well thank God for the messenger that comes to us at the close of a day of toil and, taking us to her bosom, kisses down the tired eyelids, and seals the ears in sweet and blessed slumber, while setting the spirit free to roam the universe at will. There are times when it is not only our privilege but our duty to sleep, and they who neglect that duty do so at their peril. Our cemeteries and our hospitals are being filled with men and women who have transgressed nature's law, and robbed both body and mind of their rightful period of repose.

But there are also times when to sleep is criminal. However weary the body, the nurse watching by the sick, the pilot at the helm, and the sentinel on the field of battle must keep awake, because they have assumed responsibility for the lives of others. There is also a sleep that is a guilty waste of time and opportunity. For Sisera to sleep in the tent of Jael, or for Samson to slumber with his head in the lap of Delilah, or the disciples to yield to drowsiness in Gethsemane, is folly run to madness. There is a sleep that is the ante-chamber to the grave, and those who enter there are marching headlong to their doom.

Watchfulness is the keynote of the Christian life. Many of the figures used in the New Testament to describe the followers of Jesus have awakeness and alertness as their chief significance. He is a soldier in the midst of armed and merciless foes; a merchantman in quest of goodly pearls; a servant watching for his master's return; a farmer who has sown his field with wheat, and whose enemy is watching for an opportunity to sow it with tares. Watch! Watch! Watch! is the exclamation that rings through both the public and private addresses of our Lord. The same cry was taken up by the apostles, and it is the cry that I want to pass on to you tonight.

Christianity has had to contend with many and mighty foes during the centuries that have passed since the church was first given her world-wide mission of evangelism. In the face of scorn and ridicule, against wickedness and idolatry, through flood and flame, she has moved forward victoriously. But today she is confronted by another and very different foe. It is no longer unpopular to be religious; indeed, one may greatly add to his social status by becoming a member of a Christian church. The fires of persecution have been extinguished, and where once the stake was fixed, there stands today the stately monument. Today the church is confronted by a more subtle and more deadly foe. She has reached the Laodicean age, and has come to think of herself as rich, and increased in goods, and as needing nothing, and satisfaction has taken the place of aspiration. What Satan failed to do with the sword of persecution he is accomplishing with anesthetics. We are being lulled into idleness by the very abundance of our prosperity. Having won so much, and so greatly enlarged our borders, we are ready to sign a treaty of peace with a defeated enemy rather than press the war till he is annihilated. Eternal vigilance is still the price of victory, and only the wakeful can watch. There are three

things that I will dwell on for a short time tonight: First, The Condition—sleeping. Second, The Sleeping Place—among the dead. Third, The Call—“Awake.”

I. *The Condition.* The parallel between physical and spiritual sleep is so plain that one can easily trace the analogy.

In the first place, it is a very easy condition to enter. What could be easier than for a tired man to go to sleep? He makes no effort, but simply lays aside his work, and unconsciously the eyes close, and before he knows it he has passed into the land of dreams. Wakefulness must be held by the chain of resolution, but sleep comes in unbidden and closes the door behind her. Sleep will follow idleness as surely as darkness follows sunset. If you do not want to sleep, do not go to bed. First we rest, and then in a little while we rust. We began our Christian life with enthusiasm, and we purposed that, whatever others might do, we would remain faithful to our trust. For a time we ran well, because the enthusiasm of youth filled our hearts; then a sense of weariness came, and we decided to relax for a time. We did not intend to abandon the church, but for a few Sundays we would omit one service; later the prayer meeting was omitted for a time, when

business was pressing; still later and the Bible school was omitted. Like Solomon's sluggard, we asked for only a little more sleep and a little more slumber and a little folding of the hands in sleep, but we did not wake until the opportunity was gone and destruction, like an armed man, stood at the door. The story is told of an English bank that, in order to guard against robbery, not only barred its doors and windows, but placed a watchman within who was to sound an alarm at the first approach of a thief. Trusting to the barred doors and shuttered windows, the watchman sat down and slept. Then the enemy came and blew gas in through the keyhole to lull to deeper slumber the man who was placed on guard. Then the door was forced, the bank robbed, and the watchman knew nothing of it until they came to open the bank in the morning. I wonder if there will not come a frightful awaking for fathers and mothers who discover, when it is too late, that while they slept the enemy stole their boys and their girls. I remember two lines that I used to see on the calendar of a church in the North, and we would all do well to lay them to heart:

"What kind of church would my church be,
If every member were just like me?"

In the second place, sleep is a very comfortable condition. While the highest joys belong to the wakeful followers of our Lord, the sleepers are by no means uncomfortable. The only discomfort is when someone disturbs their nap. Let the preacher stress the duties of the disciple and there is either open opposition or dull resentment. If he warms up to his subject he is fanatical, and if he pleads for consecration he is too personal. It is astonishing how many people can cut a piece out of a sermon and make a cap with it and then fit it on their own heads, and because it does fit, they charge the preacher with making the cap. I have no wish to give personal offense, but if there is a sleeping Christian here tonight, I would like to put a thorn in his pillow that would compel him to awake before disaster overtakes him. We ought to be as enthusiastic for the cause of Christ as we are for the political party which has our support; and yet we will shout ourselves hoarse over a political speech that expresses our convictions, and fear to say "amen" to a sermon that endorses what we are supposed to believe.

In the third place, sleeping is a very delusive condition. What strange fancies flit through the brain of a sleeper! Sometimes he dreams that he is heaping up wealth. He thinks he is walking

through fields of gold, and gathering bonds from every blade of grass: Like the Laodiceans, he thinks he is rich and increased in goods, and has need of nothing. But there is a noise in the hall or the rattle of a window, or a cry in the street, and he awakes to discover that he is still poor and wretched and blind and naked. This is the thing that I fear for some today. We have become contented with our attainment, and will sleep on until the angel of death knocks at our door, and then we will awake to find that the things of eternal value we have missed, and that we hold in our hands only a few withered leaves. Then, too, there are awful nightmares that visit the sleeper. We have heard men cry out in terror while they slept, and when they awoke they told us of frightful monsters that pursued them, or they were on the edge of a frightful precipice and about to plunge into destruction. There are Christians, not a few, who have these nightmares. Some are sure that they were never converted at all, and others that they have lost their faith and are doomed to perish. What do we need to do for the victim of a nightmare? Give him a shake and wake him up. If you have lost the joy of your salvation and the comfort of assurance, you will

find them again just as soon as you awake from your sleep and take up your duties once more.

II. *The Sleeping Place.* "Arise from among the dead." I wonder if the apostle had in mind a battlefield where the dead were lying about, and here and there among them some who had only fallen asleep, and were in danger of being buried with their fallen comrades. In the spiritual realm there is a sleep so deep that it is hard to distinguish it from death. It is a trance in which even breathing is not perceptible. I suspect there have been cases in which people have been buried alive, so like was their condition to that of death. I know, too, that there are Christians, not a few, who are accounted as dead by the people with whom they associate. If you refer to them as Christians the hearer will reply, "Perhaps they are, but they are not working very hard at the business."

In the first place, there are some sleeping in the midst of their dead professions. Years ago they had a bright and beautiful experience, and they took their place publicly with the people of God. In their baptism and at the Lord's table they solemnly dedicated themselves to the Christ and his cause. They entered the race full of confidence and determination, but as the weeks and

months rolled by they began to feel weary and slackened their pace, and finally dropped out of the running. Today, if they have any assurance at all, it is based on an old and moth-eaten experience. Do not think that I am making light of the early experiences of a redeemed soul, for I am not. But as one cannot satisfy the claims of hunger today by recalling the delights of yesterday's dinner, even so the soul cannot be sustained by the memories of the past. Of course, the true wife glories in the memory of that hour when the bridegroom placed the wedding ring on her finger, provided the blessed fellowship of that time is continued, but the neglected or deserted woman will derive little comfort from wearing the band of gold. There is no inspiration—there is only torture—in the recollection of a lost joy. It is still true that

“Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, ‘It might have been.’ ”

Still others are sleeping among dead formalities. They are still outwardly active in the services of the church, and in a perfunctory way they go through their religious duties; but their songs and their prayers are as soulless as the kiss of a witness on the cover of a Bible. The thing is done because it must be, and it is finished with a

sigh of relief. I am told that American debutantes will spend thousands of dollars and weary weeks of practicing under the tutelage of some impoverished noblewoman that they may know exactly how to bow and smile when they are presented to their majesties, the king and queen. Of course, their majesties know that all this show of obeisance and reverence is less than skin deep, and may cover a heart that is bitterly antagonistic to them.

I like a beautiful church service, provided it expresses a deep and abiding devotion, but I am sure that in the sight of Jehovah the cry of the poor penitent, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," was more beautiful than the ornate petition of the Pharisee. It is not the bowed head and bent knee, but the humble and the contrite heart that is beautiful in the sight of Jehovah. He says, "With this man will I dwell; even with him that is humble and of a contrite heart, and that trembleth at my word."

In the third place, there are many who are asleep in the midst of dead sinners. In this city there are thousands of men of whom God says, "They are dead in trespasses and sins," and there are other thousands who claim to have been delivered from death by the grace of God in Christ

Jesus. But only God knows which are asleep and which are dead. Outwardly they are just alike. The light of grace is in their hearts, but it is so shaded by the things of the world that not a ray falls on the darkened path of the unsaved. We excuse ourselves for our neglect by saying that it will come out all right in the end—that a good God will find some way of saving them, because he is too good to let anyone perish. Brethren, when Satan turns preacher we all need to have discriminating ears. It is this same old liar who deceived our first parents by telling them how bad God was. He is equally a liar when he asks us to make the goodness of God an excuse for our idleness. Many of us will be working this week among men and women who are dead in trespasses and sins, and God asks us to arise from among them and show that we have life indeed.

III. *The Gracious Call.* “Awake!” I have time for only a word or two on this point. What does this call mean?

In the first place, it means, get your eyes open. The professed Christian who cannot see much that needs doing today is still sound asleep. If this old Book be true, then millions of souls are going out into a Christless and, therefore, hopeless, eternity. God needs human tongues to warn them and

tell them of the way of escape; he needs human hands with which to bind up the hearts that are broken, and human feet to carry the message afar, and human hearts to bear his love to the needy. As in Gethsemane the Son of man was betrayed into the hands of sinners, because those who were appointed to watch went to sleep, so today the greatest foes to his cause are not armed soldiers, but sleeping watchers.

In the second place, it means more than get your eyes open, it means get up. "Arise from among the dead." You know what happens when you are aroused from a sound sleep. Unless you get up at once you will be off to dreamland again. I am quite sure that many of us have been aroused by the things that have been told us. We are ready to concede that there are many things that ought to be done. But if we do not proceed to do them we shall soon be sound asleep again. Let us not wait for someone else to begin, but see to it that we at least shall not neglect our duties to the lost.

The third thing is to appropriate the great promise, "and Christ shall shine upon thee." His smile will gladden our hearts; his truth will show us the way, and his presence will be an infinite compensation for the things we have given up.

I am not denying that there is a pleasure in sleeping, but life's fullest pleasure is in wakefulness and in fellowship with Jesus Christ. Let me urge you to take to your heart this text tonight, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

XVII

ASPIRATION AND ATTAINMENT

Philippians 3: 10—That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Wishing may be a very noble or a very ignoble practice. It may be but the air castle of the visionary, or the senseless babbling of the lazy vagrant. In many cases it is but a foolish murmuring against our lot—a sinful protest against the dispensations of Providence. But there is a splendid wishing that expresses itself in a purpose to realize a great ideal. It is the selection of a goal toward which the whole life is directed, and for the attainment of which every other desire is made a servant. It is the athlete entering for the contest, and then stripping himself of every superfluous garment, and straining every nerve and muscle to their utmost tension in the endeavor to win the race.

We have for our text this morning Paul's ideal as he faced the Christian life, and the methods

by which he sought its realization. Paul had a magnificent conception of manhood, and while insisting dogmatically on the sinnership of man and the Saviourship of Jesus, he magnified man's power and glory when he linked himself by faith to the great emancipator. In emphasizing the doctrine of grace there is always the danger of belittling human endeavor, and making the mercy of God an excuse for idleness. Because we cannot do everything it does not follow that we need do nothing. Man's supreme greatness consists not in what he is, but in what he may become. A regenerated soul is a germ of infinite possibilities. The Cross is more than a door of hope through which we can look into heaven; it is a Jacob's ladder on which we may rise from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies. In its essence Christianity is a supreme appeal to human ambition.

Man is the only creature on earth that is discontented with himself and with his environment. The fish in the sea, the beast in the forest, and the bird in the air are contented. When God made them he placed within them no ambition, and so they build their homes and live their lives exactly as their ancestors did thousands of years ago. The lair of the beast and the nest of the bird today differ in no respect from those of the earliest ages.

But compare the homes of the cave dwellers, the huts of the Hottentots, and the wigwams of the Red Men with the stately mansions that adorn our avenues and boulevards, and note the difference. The homes of those we call the common people today surpass in luxury and comfort the palaces of a few years ago. There is something lacking in the young people who are content to dwell in the valley, and are never thrilled with a vision of the mountain peak, and stirred with a desire to set foot on its utmost peak. Practically all the great appeals of the Bible are made to human ambition. God sets before us a supreme prize and then asks us to run and obtain.

This morning I want to bring before you The Foundation, The Aspiration, and The Occupation of a really great life.

I. *The Foundation.* In theology as in everything else, a correct beginning is essential to real progress. As the mariner first takes account of the sun so as to correctly locate himself on the deep, and afterwards shapes his course toward the desired haven, so must we discover our true relation to God before we can make real progress in the heavenly way. A clear understanding of two or three fundamental doctrines will keep us from many dangerous rocks.

The first great doctrine on which Paul rests his great argument is that of electing grace. By election I mean the purpose of God in each individual life. I mean that behind our presence in this world was the purpose of God to place us here. That behind our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Saviour was the purpose of God that we should be in the redeemed family. I do not mean that a certain few were selected out of Adam's great family who were to be saved apart from any activity or effort on their own part, but that apart from the movement of God's grace no child of Adam would ever have yielded to the drawings of the Spirit, and accepted Jesus as Saviour and King. When Paul exclaimed, "That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," he was but giving expression to the conviction that before he had laid hold on Christ, Christ had laid hold on him. There was a time when the very name of Jesus was hateful to the ears of Paul, and when in the fierceness of his hatred he set himself to the task of obliterating both Jesus and his followers. Then a hand was laid lovingly upon him and his turbulent spirit was subdued. Then the Christ called to him and he yielded, and later he discovered that he had been chosen in Christ from before the foundation

of the world. I do not ask you to begin by believing in your election, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Any belief in election that is not based on the consciousness of regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ is unreliable and fatally misleading. You tell me that there is no credit in a man being saved if he was dragged into salvation by a power external to himself. Do you mean to tell me that a man is free when, by the sophistry of a keener mind than his own, he is led to take a position of hostility to God, and that he is in bondage when, through a still clearer mind, he is led to see the truth and turn away from the deceiver? Do you tell me that a man is free when he believes and follows a lie, and that he passes into bondage when he believes and obeys the truth?

The second item in Paul's conviction was the belief that Jehovah had a very definite plan for his life when he chose him to be one of the redeemed company. "That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Convinced that the hand of Christ had been laid upon him, Paul was eager to know for what purpose that choice had been made. We have missed the meaning of our election if we have failed to discover that the divine choice means something more than merely keeping us out of hell, and

ushering us into a heaven by and by. Let me illustrate. Here is a poor orphan boy whose life is surrounded with the squalor and shame of poverty. One day a man of wealth and culture offers to take him into his home, and adopt him as his son. Suddenly the boy finds himself in a splendor of which he had never before dreamed. His body was washed, his old rags discarded, and he was given fine, new clothing, a beautiful room handsomely furnished, and he received an abundance of good food every day. If he was a true boy, and had within him the spirit of a real man, he would set himself to find out what sort of life his foster-father had chosen for him and how he might help in its realization. He would go to school, submit to tutors, and undertake tasks, simply because it was the will of his foster-father that he should do so. That is how it was with Paul, and how it ought to be with you and me. Having been lifted out of our condemnation by Christ, and had our feet set upon the rock of emancipation, our supreme ambition ought to be to discover God's will for us, and then bend every energy to accomplish that end. This is the inward evidence that the Holy Spirit has wrought within our hearts the great change that we call regeneration, and is leading us up from babyhood to manhood and

womanhood. There were two great requests that fell from the lips of the prodigal, and they reveal the difference between the old and the new nature. The first cry was before he left home, and consisted of two words, "Give me!" The second was after he had returned home and was forgiven, and then his cry was "Make me!"

II. *Aspiration.* A recent writer has declared that all human endeavor is directed toward one of three things—Knowledge, Power, Experience. Some seek for knowledge for the mere sake of knowing. They burn the midnight lamp, and often rob themselves of needed rest, merely for the sake of knowing something more than their neighbors. Others seek for power. The accumulation of wealth or of knowledge is but a means to an end, and that end is to be in the place of rulership. Still others seek for character, well knowing that the measure of a man's enjoyment in this world is determined, not by what he has, but by what he is. Paul weaves all three into his ideal.

First, his ideal of knowledge is to know Christ. "That I may know him." Paul was a graduate of the school of Gamaliel, and probably knew as much or more of science and philosophy and art than any man of his day; but he declared that they

were but as refuse when compared with the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Paul already knew much about Jesus, for he had not only met him on the Damascus road, but he had spent three years with him in Arabia, studying all the details of his mission and his character; yet he was conscious that in Jesus Christ there were still unfathomed deeps of wisdom, and he was ready to cast aside all his accumulation of human wisdom if only he might learn more of his Master. Most of us know a good deal about Robert E. Lee, but how many of us ever knew him? To know a man we must enter into his life, feel things as he feels them and see things as he sees them. Perhaps some of you may be reading the story now running in one of our daily papers—*The Man Nobody Knows*, by Bruce Barton. Of course, the writer has reference to Christ, and even a superficial reading of the book will convince any Christian that its author gives evidence that he is one of the nobodies, for he certainly does not know the Jesus of the New Testament nor the Messiah of the Old. There is really only one way to know a person, and that is to live with him. You may recall that near the end of his life Paul exclaimed, "I know whom I have believed." Remember what Paul was doing when he made that boast. He was

baring his neck for the stroke of the lictor's axe, that he might seal his testimony with his blood.

Paul's second aspiration was to know the power of Christ's resurrection. Theologians differ as to the exact meaning to be attached to these words. Some hold that by "The power of his resurrection" Paul meant the special power that Jesus had to convince after he rose from the dead. Others hold that it was the power that raised Jesus from the dead that Paul was coveting. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul refers to the power of Christ's resurrection, and there it is evident that he is referring to that power that raised him from the dead. I think that Paul meant that he desired that the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead might so enter and control his life that he could live the resurrection life while he was still in the body. It is worthy of note that Jesus never failed to convince anyone with whom he talked after he rose from the dead. The doubts of the disciples, the open unbelief of Thomas, and the persecuting hate of Saul of Tarsus all melted away when they came face to face with the risen Jesus. Science may tell us of the multiform workings of life, but it has no power to impart life to the dead. Philosophy may develop the thinking brain, but it has no power to make the brain think. Wealth

may give to Lazarus a rock-hewn tomb, but it has no power to awake him out of his sleep. The only power that will "convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come," is that power of the Spirit that wrought in the life of Paul.

Paul's third great aspiration was that he might have fellowship with Christ's sufferings. This runs counter to human nature. Suffering is the one thing that every child of Adam strives to avoid. We often wish for the pleasures that fall to the lot of others; but who ever craved their pains? What were the peculiar characteristics of the sufferings of Christ? The answer is simple; they were vicarious. Never a pain entered his life but was for the sin of someone else; never a sorrow filled his heart except for others' sufferings. Paul knew that the death of Christ was for the sake of a sinful race, and he wished in the same way to lay down his life that others might be saved. How quickly the church would dominate the world, if all her membership coveted a share in the sufferings of Christ, and were willing to be made conformable unto his death!

III. *An Occupation.* Having told us what he desired for himself as a follower of Jesus Christ,

Paul proceeds to tell us the things he did in pursuing that end.

First: "Forgetting those things that are behind." What were the things that were behind? Well, there was the old life of sin and persecution. There are some Christians who, like Lazarus, never seem to get rid of their grave clothes. They are continually reminding themselves of their past wickedness, and are afraid that someone may remember their past folly and upbraid them for their conceit. God has forgotten all about that old past, and asks us to forget it also. Then there was Paul's wonderful experience on the Damascus road, and his baptism and his escape from persecutions. What was he to do about these things? Forget them. Yes, we have all had some fierce fights, and still carry the scars; but we are to forget them. Forget the dark days that are past, because there are brighter days to come. Forget the victories of yesterday, because we may win a more glorious one tomorrow.

Paul's second great method was concentration. "This one thing I do." Many of us accomplish too little because we attempt too much. Before we have one thing half finished we drop it and try something else. God never gave to you or me a work that he did not want us to complete. Of

course, he has many things he wants done, but he does not expect any one person to do them all. I remember the story of a blacksmith who was approached by a young fellow who wanted to learn the trade. He was given a piece of iron and told to make an axe. After pounding away for some time he went to the master and asked to be permitted to make a hammer, as he could not make an axe. Permission being given, he spent sometime heating and hammering, and then asked permission to make it into a horseshoe. Another half hour was spent in hammering, and then he confessed failure and asked what he should do with the iron. "Throw it in the tub of water," was the reply, "you can surely make a fizzle of it." Too many of us make fizzles of our service because we get tired before we complete our task.

In the third place, Paul's plan was to continue in defiance of difficulties. It is Godlike to be able to work slowly, and never become discouraged. Paul says, "I press toward the mark." It is not hard to enter a race, but it takes pluck and vim to keep on running when some athlete dashes past us.

This is the message that I would like to leave with you. Before us is a great task, and with us is a great Leader. Let us set our faces like a flint

to achieve a victory. In the Rocky Mountains, four thousand miles from the Atlantic, there is a tiny pool that a thirsty ox might drink dry. But one day it decided to go to its home in the sea. Dreaming of the white-winged ships that float on the bosom of the ocean, it stepped over the rim of its cup and started down the mountain side. It leaped from crag to crag, and reached out its hands and grasped other streams that would journey with it. Ever widening and ever deepening, and transforming deserts into gardens as it moved, it finally joined itself in wedlock with the Mississippi, and together they moved on to the sea. That tiny spring on the mountain side is your life and mine. If we will set out to find our home in the great deep of God's eternal purpose, we shall find helpers by the way, and at last we shall end our journey in that "sea of glass," which is before the throne of God.

XVIII

A GRACIOUS GUARANTEE

Philippians 4: 19—My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

This text is a band of pure gold set with one priceless jewel. Those who wear it have not only the guarantee of rank in the kingdom of God, but the assurance of full and eternal satisfaction. "My God" is the band of pure gold, and "the riches of his glory" is the one flawless jewel. Those who wear it may put away all regrets for the past, and all fears for the future. It is at once the mark of royal rank, and the guarantee of exhaustless wealth.

As the beauty of a picture may be enhanced by the light in which it is hung, so the setting of this text reveals a new glory in the message. Paul, the aged, was immured in a Roman dungeon, and the little church in Philippi had sent him a gift to comfort him in his hour of need. What the gift was we are not told. Possibly a garment to keep him warm in his prison cell, or some money

to purchase food to add to his meagre prison fare. Whatever it was it awakened both joy and gratitude in his heart, and he sent them a letter acknowledging the gift, and assuring them of his contentment even within prison walls. Caesar in his palace was not as happy that day as was Paul in his dungeon. Read the letter through and you will fail to find in it a single note of repining, or a suggestion of discontent. "Rejoice" is the great word in the epistle; it occurs in every chapter. The letter closes with a song of thanksgiving. There is no room for repining in a life that is filled with the consciousness of the presence of God. It used to be said of Paganini that no matter what sort of a violin you gave him he always made perfect music. Even so the life that is filled with the conscious presence of God can take the broken strings of adversity, and the shattered bow of disappointment, and fill the soul with the sweetest melody.

There are two kinds of peace in the world—peace of mind, and peace of heart. Peace of mind is the possession of those who can see their way through the difficulty. It is the peace of the man who has accumulated a competence, and who knows that poverty can never be his companion. It is the peace of the student who has found the

solution to his problem, and who knows that it can never vex him again. But peace of heart is that which comes to a man in the midst of his struggle, because of his confidence in God, and his conviction that all things shall work together for his good. That is the peace that filled the hearts of Paul and Silas when they made the walls of their prison ring with their song of triumph. That was the peace to which Jesus referred when he said to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." There are three things in our text that I want to emphasize this morning. They are: Our Needed Supplies, The Source of Our Supplies, and The Measure of Our Supplies.

I. *Our Needed Supplies.* Of course, in the time at my disposal I cannot even name all the things that we, as human beings, need in our pilgrimage from earth to heaven. The most I can attempt is to mention a few that are common to all.

In the first place, we all stand in need of material supplies. Most of us are confronted from time to time with the problem of food and raiment, and the materials essential to the comforts of life, both for ourselves and for those dependent upon us. Even those of largest means know only too well that they are as dependent upon the bounty

of God as is the poorest in all the land. What would be the advantage of all the gold in the world if the seed failed to germinate, and gaunt famine stalked through our land? So, in a very real sense we are all alike dependent upon the bounty of Jehovah. It is God who supplies the table of the millionaire and the table of the humble toiler, and he will do it to the end of the days. That does not mean that we can fold our hands in idleness and then expect Jehovah to feed us. God hates laziness, and has provided that in the sweat of our faces we shall earn our bread. He might have made fresh loaves grow on the trees each morning, but he has provided that the soil must be ploughed and the grain scattered, and the harvest reaped and the straw threshed, and the flour ground and the food prepared. He might have piled the coal on the surface of the earth like stones by the roadside, but instead he has buried it hundreds of feet under the surface that men might have to mine it. Sinless men and women may continue for all eternity to enjoy life without toil, but sinful people are to be kept wholesome by daily doing their work. David exclaimed on one occasion, "Once I was young, and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread." Just how the

Lord will provide I do not know, but that he will provide I am certain, because he has told us so. But someone will reply, "I do not want charity." And why not? Charity is the most beautiful thing in all the world, for charity is love's other name. It is deplorable that such a beautiful thing should be degraded by pride until people shrink from association with her. I suspect, had you asked Elijah, he would have expressed a preference for the food brought him by an angel rather than that brought by the ravens, but they were both sent by God, and should have been received with equal gratitude. Let us thank God if we have the ability and the opportunity to earn our daily bread, and if we do not have them, then let us thank him for sending us our portion even if a raven should bring it.

n In the second place, there are those who will need comfort in the hour of affliction. Sorrow and death are still abroad in the land, and they find their way into most of our lives sooner or later, and when they do come God will be there with his consolations also. The Psalmist tells us that Jehovah telleth the number of the stars, and at the same time he bindeth up the broken in heart. There are some here today who would say, if my wife should die or my husband should be taken

away, or my child should perish, I could not stand the shock. Of course you could not, because God has not given you the strength to bear such a burden, and, therefore, he will not ask you to bear such a load. If ever the time comes that God wants you to carry such a load, then he will give you the strength needed for the burden. To each of us he says, "As thy day so shall thy strength be." The trouble with most of us is that we want the strength without the burden, but God never trusts us with two days' strength for one day's need. He had taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and if new burdens come, then new strength will accompany them. Have you ever tried to picture yourself going to the stake as a martyr? Of course, you could not endure the first touch of the flame, but if that day ever arrives, then God will give you the strength to go with confidence even into the fiery trial. God feeds all the little sparrows, but not one of them knows where tomorrow's food will come from. With the first dawn of the morning you will find them up and at work, and throughout the year they will lack no good thing.

Then we are all going to need special grace when we come to the valley of the shadow of death. From that day most of us shrink. We may talk

somewhat bravely about it now, but it will be different when our strength is failing, and we find our feet slipping over the brink that carries us to the silent, sullen stream. But when that day comes we shall find that God has the supply of grace ready for us. It has been my lot to see many Christians die, but I have never seen one who was unwilling to depart when the great day arrived. As the hour for embarking comes, they seem to have a vision of that other city, and are ready to leave those they love on earth to join the other company in the Father's house. Have you not seen children playing with their toys, when to suggest to them to go to bed would have been almost to break their hearts? You might talk to them all you please about the beauty and pleasure of sleep, but they want to play. Let them alone and by and by when sleepy-time comes they will leave their toys and climb into mother's lap and want to go to sleep. Even so when the dying time arrives we shall be ready to lay us down and sleep in the keeping care of our Father-Mother God.

II. *The Source of Our Supplies.* I am at a loss to know how to bring before you the import of this great declaration, "My God shall supply all your needs."

In the first place, I want you to notice that the promise has reference to our needs, and not to our wants. We want a thousand things that we do not need. We desire many things that we must not have; and we need many things that we do not want. A true father does not give to his child all that he wants, for that would be to accomplish his ruin. But he studies the needs of the child, and then suits his gifts accordingly. I do not know all the things that you need, nor do I know all the things that I myself need; but I am confident that God knows, and that his gifts will be measured in the vessel of my needs. You will recall that when our Lord told his disciples that he was going away, Simon Peter wanted to go with him, but Jesus refused the request. Think of what Simon would have missed had he been permitted to die at Calvary. The full glory of his life would not have appeared had he not remained with the disciples down here. Elijah wanted to die when he was under the juniper tree, but what God had for him was a passage into glory in a chariot of fire. Moses did not want to face Pharaoh, but had he not gone that way he would not have led Israel into the land of promise.

Notice, in the second place, that little word *all*. "My God shall supply all your needs." Most of

us can believe that God will supply our great needs, such as food and raiment, and grace for the dying hour, but I wonder how many of us believe that all that we need is what God sends us. I suspect some of you will say, "I certainly did not need this sickness that has come upon me." "I surely did not need the added burden that has come to me through the dishonesty of someone I trusted." But you did need them, and, therefore, God permitted them to enter your life. The only reason God ever sends a black cloud is that there may be a refreshing shower. You have perhaps noticed that the robins always sing before a storm. That is because they know that the drenching rain will bring to the earth's surface the worms with which they can feed their young. What God sends to you and me is always the supply of a need, and what he withholds is always for our good.

Notice once more that it is *my God* who shall supply all your needs. There are always limits as to what our earthly friends can do for us, but my God has an infinite supply. We all have friends who would do many things for us if they had the power, and we know other people who have the power, but they have not the desire. But my God has both the will and the ability. We

often hear of cases of suffering and we wish that we had known of the case so that we might have ministered. But my God knows every need, not only of his redeemed children, but even of the whole animal creation. When I think of all the needs of all the people, and all the beasts and birds and fish and insects, and remember that my God never forgets any one of them, I am ashamed that I ever doubted or feared. Jehovah openeth his hand and supplieth the need of every living thing. He never tires of doing it and he never becomes impatient because we forget to be grateful to the Giver.

III. *The Measure of Our Supplies.* "According to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

✓ In the first place, that means, not according to our sense of need, but according to his knowledge. While it is true that God wants us to make our requests known unto him, he does not measure his gifts by the size of our requests, but according to his knowledge of our needs. Just as a true father will have different treatment for the son who is designed to be a great leader, from that accorded the boy who is to be a follower, so God has his designs for each one of our lives, and his gifts will be for the achievement of that design. God's treatment of Joshua differed from his treat-

ment of Caleb, because they were being prepared for different service. I read recently of two boys, sons of a rich man who occupied a conspicuous place in the government, and they were discussing what they wanted to be when they became men. The younger said, "I want to be a great athlete, and I want to go to the college that has the best football team, and the best baseball players, and the fastest sprinters." The older boy said, "I want to be whatever dad wants me to be, and I will go to whatever college he selects for me." That is the true spirit of the followers of Jesus. To be willing to take the place of leadership if he calls us thereto, and to be willing to fill the lowliest position if that be his will. The greatest man in all the world was the One who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even unto death." Jesus left it to the Father to assign him both his place and his task, and we are most like him when we think little of our own preference, and desire supremely that we may do his will.

✓ In the second place, he gives, not according to our deserts, but according to his own grace. We go seeking around for the little cup of our own deserts, and we want God to fill that, whereas he is opening the treasury of his graciousness and

pouring its full tide into our lives. I recall hearing a child of God, into whose life there had come a great and unexpected mercy, exclaim, "I do not deserve this." Of course, he did not. Neither do we deserve the blessings that come to us new every morning and fresh every night. But our Father is measuring them, not in the tiny cup of our deserts, but in the measureless fountain of his own gracious heart. He does not give us all the same things, but he will give to each one that which is best for us. He gives to the antelope his speed, and to the elephant his strength; to the bird of paradise his gorgeous plumage, and to the lark his matchless song. There have been times when I have wished for the eloquence of a Spurgeon and the brilliance of a Maclaren, but God knew that such gifts would have spoiled me, and I would have spoiled the gifts, and so he withheld them, and made me what I am because in this capacity I can serve him best.

2 In the third place, he gives them all in Jesus Christ. Whatever there is in Christ is mine. God gives Christ to each one of us, and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." God spreads his table with every needed mercy, and then he asks us to help ourselves. Do you want faith? Take Christ into the heart and unbelief will

disappear. Do you want comfort? Take him into your life and you will know "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." Do you need guidance? Take him, for he is "the way and the truth and the life." He is my God who will supply all your needs. Take him this morning, and then you will go to your homes in peace and gladness.

1. Leads on great mission. His strength supplied. He is the strength in His strength.

See also - John and S.
Holtzner L. P. 46.

XIX

A VICTORIOUS SAVIOUR

Revelation 19: 16—He hath on his vesture and his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

I was in London when George the Fifth was crowned as king and emperor. It is doubtful if the world ever witnessed a more gorgeous display of the trappings of royalty. Men from every continent, and of every race and creed were there to join in the festivities. Indian princes, colonial premiers, and African chiefs came to recognize their sovereign and to do homage at his feet. The crowned heads of Europe and Asia, and representatives of the great republics of the world were there to join in the festivities and offer their congratulations to the emperor-king. At the royal banquet the guests ate from dishes of pure gold, the intrinsic value of which was placed at fifteen million dollars, while an equal sum was represented in the jewels worn by the ladies. But there was more than a lavish display of wealth. Vast bodies of troops paraded the streets and sur-

rounded Buckingham palace, while the battleships of the nations filled the Thames. It was peace revealing her readiness for war—an empire reared and ruled by force. A single spark of international jealousy changed that scene of rejoicing and congratulations into the most terrible struggle the world has ever witnessed. A throne balanced on bayonets may be conspicuous, but it is never stable, and an empire reared on mere physical force will sooner or later crumble into dust. In the recent history of Germany we have a conspicuous confirmation of the words of our Lord, that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword.

This morning I want to direct your thought to a coming King whose empire is to be world-wide and abiding. As his subjects, we may appear to-day as contemptible to the enthroned powers of worldliness and selfishness as did the ancient Britons to the Roman invaders; but under his leadership we shall one day demonstrate that the meek shall inherit the earth. It took a thousand years to lift Great Britain out of serfdom and obscurity into the place of a first-class power, and we need not marvel that the more stately and more abiding empire of Christ is still incomplete,

although nearly two thousand years have come and gone since he laid its foundation at Calvary.

The text that I have selected for our meditation belongs to a time when the outlook for the church was most depressing. The sword of persecution was unsheathed, and John the beloved disciple was taken from the seven little churches in Asia Minor and banished to a lonely island in the Ægean Sea. As seen from the earthward side, it did look as though the cause was lost. But God in his mercy permitted John to look into heaven, and there he saw, not a defeated and dying church, without a leader and without a hope, but he saw a mighty conqueror leading forth a magnificent army, and they went from conquering to still conquer. It is this vision I want you to get this morning. I will arrange what I have to say under two heads, viz., The Mission of the King, and The Associates of the Conqueror.

I. *The Mission of the King.* The failure of the church is one of the commonest subjects of conversation today. Our magazines and newspapers as well as our popular speakers are ever ready to point out the weakness of the church and the faults of her members, and they do not hesitate to declare that there must be either a revolution in the organization, or the substitution of some-

thing else for the worn-out methods and message of the churches of the land. I am not here this morning to defend the church, but to point out to you the mission of Jesus Christ and to assure you that he will be victorious. Four things at least are included in his mission.

In the first place, he came to reveal God to man. All the sin in the world today grows out of the fact that man does not know God. In his great prayer, just before his crucifixion, our Lord exclaimed, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." Because the world did not know this righteous Father it broke his laws and trampled on his grace, and is still running riot in sin. But I think that we are all conscious that the world is coming to a truer conception of God as Father and Saviour and Friend. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that a time is coming when we shall not have to say to our neighbors, know ye the Lord, for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest; and when that day dawns we shall not have to urge men to do right and avoid wickedness. Men are coming to know God better. The bloody persecutions of the Dark Ages would be impossible today. The men who burned their fellows at the stake did it through ignorance, not through malice, and civil war within

the bounds of the church will cease when her members know the Father as he is known and revealed by Jesus Christ. The world may be caring less and less for ecclesiastical vestments and ritualistic performances, but it is putting a higher value on the Spirit of the living God.

In the second place, Jesus has set himself to the task of reconciling man to God. Without at this time attempting to discuss the doctrine of the Fall, or how it came that our first parents believed the lie that was told them, the result of that belief was the conviction that their creator was not their friend. That he was laying upon them unnecessary restraints and withholding from them the richest pleasures of life. It is useless for us to deny the fact that in all our hearts there is still the suspicion that desired good is withheld, and undesired sorrow and pain are inflicted. What Jesus has said, and what he is proving to the world is that "All things work together for good to them that love God; to them that are the called according to his purpose." Some of us can remember when the burden of most evangelistic preaching was, "Repent, or you will go to hell." But we have come to learn that a faith that is the child of fear is a poor substitute for a faith that is the child of love. The electric chair may

frighten some men from committing murder, but it will not make them hate cruelty and love kindness. It was not the harshness of the elder brother, but the graciousness of the father, that brought the prodigal home. The patient can endure the surgeon's knife when he knows that love is guiding his hand.

In the third place, Jesus has set himself to the task of taking sin out of your heart and mine. Those who have been longest in the service of God will confess that there are still in our hearts things that ought not to be there, and we often cry out, as did Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" To be perfectly free, not only from actual transgression, but from any wish to transgress, is our dream of heaven. Jesus has set for himself the task of bringing us there, and he will not fail nor be discouraged until he brings that to pass.

One other thing I must mention. Jesus has set for himself the task of bringing to the earth a perfect brotherhood. At the very gate of Eden we see the beginning of the strife when Cain rose up and slew his brother, and from then till now the strife has gone on. Not only members of the same church, but children of the same parents,

will commit all sorts of atrocities against each other. But Jesus has set for himself the task of bringing in a perfect brotherhood. If he is being hindered in the work it is because we who are his followers are failing to perform our part. Unless I am striving to be a brother to every other man, I am making it more difficult for Jesus to realize his ideal for the world in which I am living. I must not only bear wrongs without resentment, but I must seek to help those who would hinder. Brethren, the day is coming when the war drums will throb no longer and the battle flags will be furled in the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

I have been speaking of what the Captain of our salvation has set for his task in this world. Now let me point out to you those who are to be associated with him in the great enterprise.

II. *The Associates of the Conqueror.* Now let us look for a few minutes at those who went forth with this mighty conqueror, and how they conducted themselves.

In the first place, they were clothed in fine linen, pure and white. John tells us that their white raiment was composed of the righteous acts of the saints. It is worthy of note in passing that their leader wore a red uniform, while those who

followed wore white. That is just God's way of saying that in Jesus, and in Jesus alone, is found the universal atonement. But it is ours to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Believe me, brethren, when we put the truth against a lie, the truth will win; when we put kindness against cruelty, kindness will win. By making myself the friend of the man who makes himself my enemy I can vanquish him. The trouble is that instead of using the two-edged sword that came out of the mouth of the Christ, we manufacture a bludgeon for ourselves, and we fall before the foe. When the child of God resorts to the spirit and methods of the world he is like David arrayed in the armor of Saul, and if he thus ventures into the conflict he will be vanquished. But with the sling and the stone of simple faith and consecration, victory will be sure. With twelve legions of angels awaiting the command to strike, Jesus declined their aid and laid himself on that Cross that is today and will forever be his glorious throne.

The second mark of these people is that they follow the King. They do not venture to ride before their Master, but they follow wherever he may lead. We are hearing a good deal today about the new age and the modern outlook on life.

We are being told in all seriousness that the religion of a century ago has been outgrown, and that the church must adapt herself to modern conditions. We are urged to remember that this is a scientific age, and that we must look at things from the scientific viewpoint. Of course, there is some truth in that. We are not going to travel in oxcarts when we can ride in automobiles; neither shall we depend on tallow candles when we can have electric lights. We shall not attempt to cross the ocean in sailing vessels when we can go in floating palaces. But let us not forget that there are some things that do not change. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Sin does not change. We may dress it in our finest fancies, and call it by all sorts of popular names, but it will still go on blighting human lives and damning human souls. The devil has not changed; what was his motive when he beguiled our first parents is his motive this morning, and will continue to be so until that day when Jehovah will shut him up in the abyss and put a seal thereon. Love has not changed. She is still binding up broken hearts and making the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Just because these things do not change we must deal

with them just as they were dealt with four thousand, five thousand and six thousand years ago.

In the third place, I want you to notice their number. Not an army, but armies. That is the company that no man can number. In those armies there will be Protestants and Roman Catholics; there will be Baptists and Pedo-Baptists; there will be Calvinists and Armenians. They are men and women who contended fiercely for their own peculiar views. But now they have subordinated everything to the one supreme purpose of doing what their leader wants. I have not a word to say against the denominational differences of the present time, provided we do not forget that first and last we are to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Most of our theological differences are merely technical, and in the supreme test they vanish. It would be difficult to find two men more diverse in their theological views than Charles Wesley and Augustus Toplady. Before their congregations they thundered their differences, but when they came face to face with their Leader, Wesley wrote "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and Toplady wrote "Rock of Ages," two hymns that do not differ in doctrine at any point, and yet they both fairly represent their writers. In one of the last great battles of the

World War a small company of English troops found themselves mixed up with an American regiment, and they had been fighting for some time before they discovered that they were out of their regular place. But they went on fighting just the same, and did not separate until their victory was complete. When a Doughboy said to a Tommy, "What are you doing here?" the latter reached out a grimy hand and replied, "Fighting the kaiser, the same as you." We forget our regimental affiliations when we get down to the real business of fighting the devil and his associates.

Finally, they were victorious. Their leader had on his head many crowns and his armies went from conquering and to conquer. When a Roman emperor made a triumphal entry into the eternal city he rode a white horse, but his soldiers followed on foot. But in the picture brought before us, the king and his armies alike rode as conquerors, and they are to share with him in the triumph of that hour. I do not know how long the conflict is to continue, but some day the last battle will be fought, and the final victory won, and the Redeemer and the redeemed—the red-robed leader and the white-robed followers—will together share in the eternal triumph. We are

not engaged in a doubtful struggle. Victory is as sure today as it will be when that great cry is heard, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. . . . The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." And the white-robed host that follow will include every saint from Abel on to the last sinner who lays down his weapons at the feet of the Christ.

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink
Though pressed by every foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe.

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in darkness knows no fear,
In danger feels no doubt.

"Lord, give us a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of our eternal home."

THE NEW CREATION

Revelation 21: 5—He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

There is a great difference between making new things and making old things new. One is creation and the other is regeneration. One is the work of the hand and the other is the achievement of the heart. Without changing a single feature, love can make a plain face beautiful; without the addition of a single note, she changes monotony to melody. Love takes the shoddy thread of a worn-out life, and with it she weaves a cloth of gold. With the broken fragments of a fallen humanity she is rearing the temple in which Jehovah will forever dwell. Love can bind up a broken heart, and set at liberty those who have been long held in the prison house of sin. In the chapter from which I have selected our text, the seer of Patmos was given a foregleam of heaven and earth as they are yet to be; and he saw the

New Jerusalem, the capital city, in which Jehovah and his redeemed ones are to dwell forever. Marvelous indeed was the vision, for he saw a city in which neither sin, nor sorrow, nor death was ever to enter. In the center of the city sat Love enthroned, and about him were gathered the redeemed host whom Love has made new.

Before passing judgment on the act of an intelligent being, we ought to know the motive which prompted the act. Those who have pronounced humanity a failure, and man's creation little short of a blunder, have been men who have conceived of creation as an end in itself, whereas it is but a stage in the working out of the purpose of infinite love. Redemption, and not creation, was the original purpose in the mind of God, and Adam was but the rough block from which the perfect humanity was to emerge. One must not pass judgment on a palace while seeing only the scaffolding in which the structure is encased. Up to Eden we see only the mind and the hand of the great Creator, as he works behind the scaffolding; but with the advent of sin, grace began her work, and she is still carrying it on. Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, because man was created in order that he might be redeemed. Salvation is something more than elim-

inating flaws, and removing stains. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new." Some of us can remember with what skill mother could make over old garments, and have them look like new; but we knew they were not new. Things may be greatly improved in appearance by being made over, but the change does not check the process of decay, nor ward off the ultimate ruin. The modern religion of reformation without regeneration is only the making over of old garments which will ultimately fall to pieces. The religion of Jesus Christ makes new men and new women who are not only to live forever, but who are to go from glory to glory throughout eternity.

Now let us for a little time look at the new things that Jesus has brought into the world.

I. In the first place, he has given us *A New Conception of God*. From the very beginning of human history mankind has believed in a supreme Being. Atheism is but the distorted imaginings of a diseased brain. It is the fool who hath said in his heart that there is no God. It is worthy of notice in passing that he begins by saying it in his heart—that is, he begins by wishing there were no God, and finally the wish breaks

Adam and Eve did not regard God as their friend.

into speech. But let us keep in mind that it is possible for one to believe in a supreme Being, and yet have monstrous conceptions of what that Being is like. The work of Satan in Eden was not to deny the existence of Jehovah, but to misrepresent him. He represented God as a tyrannical Master who withheld from his creatures the things that would make for their largest happiness. From the days of Cain onward we find men erecting monstrosities as objects of worship, and, as offerings to these monstrosities, instituting rites that were devilish in their cruelty.

Remember the worshipers of Moloch were just as sincere when they laid their little children as offerings on his red-hot arms as we are when we place our gifts on the altar. Paul was as sincere when he took part in the killing of Stephen as he was when he himself took the martyr's place and laid down his life for the truth. Into the world at a time when men were bowing down to beasts and birds and reptiles, and offering their worship to gods more loathsome than the vilest sinners, Jesus came with his simple declaration that God is our Father. He did not talk about the infinite, eternal and almighty Jehovah, but he said, "When ye pray say, Our Father." In his great prayer in the Upper Room he said, "O

righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee." The world still does not know him, and I am afraid even his church is still far from that knowledge of the Father which Jesus possessed. A full knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of the church would save us from many of the disgraceful scenes that are enacted at religious gatherings. When that light of divine Fatherhood, kindled so long ago on the Galilean hillside, illumines the whole earth, then we will have reached the end of the things which today we all deplore.

II. In the second place, the entrance of Jesus Christ into a human soul is *The Beginning of a New Life*.

The doctrines of human depravity and regeneration have suffered much at the hand of theologians. The attempt to express them in forensic terms, and force them into physical moulds has led many to repudiate them altogether; but the declaration of Jesus, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God," is one of the outstanding facts of human experience. Passing from unbelief to faith is nothing short of passing from death unto life. It is true that "if any man be in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away and behold all things

have become new." God's plan of salvation is not merely washing a stained garment, and darning up some holes, but it is the Holy Spirit beginning with the will, and transforming the mind and the heart, until of the twain he makes one new man, so making peace.

When, in 1776, this nation threw off her allegiance to Great Britain and established her own government, that was indeed the beginning of a new administration. The will of Great Britain was no longer consulted. She still existed, but the new republic refused to recognize her authority. Becoming a Christian is simply throwing off the authority of self, and enthroning Jesus as King in the life. That man or woman is born again who can say truthfully, "I have enthroned Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and henceforth I live to do his will." That does not mean immediate emancipation from the desires of the flesh, but it does mean the recognition of the will of God as the dominating force in the life.

In the natural birth we brought into the world a number of hereditary tendencies for which we are not really responsible unless we ourselves yield to their entreaties. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, and the living Spirit of God within him is to be the power through which he is

to subdue the old man. In other words, the flesh and the Spirit fight their great battles within the compass of the regenerated soul, and they will continue to fight until every thought is brought into captivity to the will of Christ. In regeneration we take the oath of allegiance to the new King; in consecration we begin the battle; and in the end we partake of the glory of the inheritance.

III. In the third place, Jesus Christ brings to his own people *A New Moral Code*.

Morality has to do with man's relation to man, and it reached its highest peak in the Old Testament when men were taught to love their neighbors as themselves. Few indeed were the people who attained to that height. But Jesus came with his new moral code, teaching us to love our enemies as well as our friends, and to be as kind to the cruel and unthankful as we are to the generous and the gracious. On one occasion he asked, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? do not even the publicans the same? If ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? even the ungodly will do that." Then he added, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Most of us

think that we have done well if we love our friends and do good to those who do good to us, and there is something commendable in that. But in doing so we make no appeal to our enemies. It is when we do good to our enemies, that we show to the whole world that we are the children of God, for he manifested his love to those who hated him, and made a supreme sacrifice for those who despitefully treated him.

One of the old preachers has told of a man who dreamed that he went to heaven and saw God distributing beautiful jewels to the different victors who came up for their rewards. He noticed one gem of surpassing beauty, but there seemed no one to claim that. At length he asked what the jewel was, and why no one seemed to claim it. He was told that it was the pearl of perfect satisfaction, and was reserved for the soul that forgave a great wrong, and who wrought till he brought the wrongdoer to the feet of Jesus. That is what Jesus did when he prayed for those who nailed him to the tree, and when he opened the door of life eternal to those who mocked him and spit upon him. Brethren, for a time men may resist your kindness and your services, but in the end that spirit will break down every barrier, and you will know by a blessed experience what Jesus

meant when he said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Jesus conquered the world by giving himself to it, and we shall conquer all our enemies if we will follow his example. Very few of us know this to be true, because very few of us have put the doctrine to the test of experience. You have heard the story of the Chinese emperor who told his soldiers that if they would capture a certain city he would destroy every enemy he had within its walls. In a furious assault his soldiers carried the fortress, and the captives were brought forth for execution. Imagine the chagrin of his soldiers when the emperor forgave all the rebels, restored to them their property, and told them that they were free to return to their homes and their loved ones. The troops were indignant and charged the emperor with breaking his word. To this he replied, "I have not broken my word; I promised to destroy every enemy I had in the city, and I have, for all these men are now my friends." God's way of destroying an enemy is to make a friend of him, and that is the method he asks you and me to adopt.

IV. In the fourth place, Jesus has brought into the world *A New Motive*.

One has only to glance at the religious life of the world before Jesus came into it, to discover that its dominant motive was fear. "The fear of Jehovah" runs through the Old Testament like a solemn refrain, and the people were in terror lest they should make one false step and bring down upon them the vengeance of God. Their approach to his altar was like the coming of a slave to a tyrannical master, and they offered their gifts because they dreaded his wrath. Jesus came and told us that God loves us, and that the offerings that please him are not expressions of our dread, but of our grateful love. When God asks us to give for his service it is not that he may be enriched, but that we may become enlarged. A citizen may pay his taxes because the law demands it, but there is no need of a law to compel a true father to provide for his children. I believe there is a law in this land which provides a penalty for parents who neglect their children, but how many of you think of that when you purchase for your family food and raiment? If that law were abolished tomorrow you would not spend a dollar less in providing comforts for the loved members of your household. You may recall that some years ago a New England judge sentenced a delinquent husband to kiss his wife at least once each day

for six months. Can you imagine how sweet those kisses seemed to that wife? Such is the service that men render to God because the law demands it, and it is as bitter to his taste as is the law-demanded kiss.

V. In the fifth place, Jesus brought into the world *A New Conception of Religion*.

Before he came religion was looked upon as pertaining largely, if not wholly, to the life that lies on the other side of the grave. It was like a straight life insurance policy that must have its premiums paid up to the very last year, and one must die in order to realize on it. Unfortunately the world has not yet quite freed itself from that misconception. Some of us can remember when practically every appeal at an evangelistic service was the near approach of death, and frightful pictures were drawn of the soul unsaved entering the other world. According to Jesus we need religion here and now quite as much as we shall need it hereafter. If the Christian life is the best to live on the other side of the grave, it is the best to live here and now. If Christ is the best companion to have in eternity, he is also the best to have here and now. Read again the Sermon on the Mount and you will see that its nine beatitudes all belong to the life we live down here. Let us free ourselves

from that old Puritan idea that whatever is pleasant in this world must, therefore, be sinful. I read recently of an Englishman who, owing to declining health, was compelled to live in Switzerland. He bought a considerable tract of land and there built a home patterned after the one he owned in the homeland. He gave English names to every place on his estate. Each day at family worship he had his children sing the English national anthem, and he kept the Union Jack floating over his house. In other words he was leading the life of an Englishman while sojourning in a foreign land. Even so we may bring a bit of heaven down here, and when we go home we shall not go as strangers, but as returned exiles.

VI. In the sixth place, Jesus is making *A New Universe*.

When on the cross he exclaimed, "It is finished," he did not mean that henceforth he would be idle. It was but the completion of one part of his task, and the commencement of another. He has done wonders in the past nineteen centuries. He has largely transformed Europe, and made America the greatest land on earth. Slowly but surely he is pulling down and building up. Already he has cast out slavery, and the barroom has disappeared. He is making new continents

of Asia and Africa, and will go on with the work until there is a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness and love will hold universal sway.

VII. Finally, Jesus is offering to every soul *A New Chance*.

This morning my Master wants me to offer to every man and woman who may be conscious of past failures an opportunity to make a new beginning. To those of you who have made a profession of faith but are aware of many follies and failures, he comes, as he came to Simon, with a call for a new consecration. To those of you who have never stepped over the line, he gives an invitation that you take that step this morning. He will begin by giving you a new heart of faith and love, and a new task that is worthy of one who is a child of the living God. This is Fathers' Day, and I want to appeal to you as fathers and as mothers to come under the dominion of Jesus, and with him not only make your own life sweet and wholesome, but also to lead your boys and girls into the path that is strewn with blessings down here, and leads to the other land where only blessedness is known.

Rev. Mr. [unclear] is writing [unclear]
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